Quickfiring Walsall sink Gills

PANICKY DEFENCE CONCEDES TWO GOALS IN TWO MINUTES

WALSALL 2, GILLINGHAM 1

BY JOHN WINTER

PANICKY in defence, Gillingham looked like being overwhelmed by the tide of Walsall's flowing football at Fellows Park yesterday evening when they conceded two goals in two minutes.

But this did not transpire, and the goals — scored in the 24th and 25th minutes — marked the peak of the Saddlers' game.

Gillingham did not do enough in the remainder of the match to deserve a point, but the chances were there if they had been a little more on the ball.

Three visiting football managers, including Oxford's Arthur Turner, saw little to impress them from *either side.*

Gillingham were well below their best, though they fielded an unchanged team. Terry Simpson — skipper for the day on his return to the club he captained last season — tried hard to get his forwards going, but with little success.

The speedy Walsall forwards — they have so many good wingers these days that they can afford to drop last season's top scorer Terry Watson — had a field day in the first half-hour.

Morris and Stevens ran the Gills off their feet and goalkeeper John Simpson had to make good saves from Baker and Wilson when goals looked certain.

BRIAN YEO — miss of the match and then scored from the spot.

Mel Machin robbed Wilson of the ball when he burst through and had his foot back for a clear shot, and then Williams misheaded in the area, John Sumpson had to summon a desperate running save to push the ball clear.

In a breakaway Yeo had bad luck when he beat goalkeeper Bob Wesson with a glancing header after a pass by Woodley, but saw the ball go inches wide.

With the Gills in a rare old state, Athey opened the way to Walsall's first goal when he drew three defenders to the right and then flicked the ball across for the unmarked **Geoff Morris** to belt it into the net.

Then Gregg and Wilson combined in a move up the right, and after slipping a Williams tackle, Wilson pulled the ball back to **Baker** who hit it on the run low inside the post for Walsall's second.

The Gills played better after the interval although far too many passes were going astray from the wing-halfs and Woodley was starved of the ball.

Failed

Riddick, who was having a difficult match against centre-half Jones, managed to get his head to a centre from Green, but it was saved easily.

Yeo made the miss of the match when he failed to connect with a cross from Woodley only a few feet from the gaping goal.

He said afterwards: "It was so easy, I must have taken my eyes off the ball to see it in the net."

Morris hit the bar for Walsall, and then in the last minute Gillingham scored a consolation goal from the penalty spot after Bennett handled the ball. **Yeo** hit his 16th goal of the season.

Walsall: Wesson; Gregg, Evans; Athey, Jones, Bennett, Stevens, Baker, Wilson, Trevis, Morris.

Gillingham: J. Simpson; Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith.

EASTER TOUR PLANNED

The Blue and Whites Association intend to organize a trip for Gills' fans to take in the Easter holiday matches at Oldham on Good Friday (4 April) and at Mansfield the following day.

Supporters would leave the Towns on the Friday morning, staying overnight in the Manchester area and travelling to Mansfield the next day. Cost will be £4 4s., including bed and breakfast, or £2 for the trip only.

On the Monday, Gillingham will complete their Easter programme with a home match against Barrow.

Machin is Hayward's only worry

MEL MACHIN, who had one of his finest games of the season on Saturday, may have to pay for the tremendous performance he put up. He strained himself during the match and could be a doubtful starter for tonight's (Tuesday) visit to Walsall.

The team will be leaving just after lunchtime today but, other than the Machin worry, manager Basil Hayward is beginning to replenish some of his old confidence in the team and is looking forward to tonight's clash with the Midlanders who were beaten 4—0 by the Gills in November.

The Gills' boss was full of praise for the way his players pulled off the double against Northampton and he commented: "I think they showed everyone that, given the breaks, they play good football and are as good a unit as anyone.

"Saturday was, however, really no different than other matches we have had — except that this time we had the breaks and the ball ran for us," he added.

Mr. Hayward's confidence in his team is also reflected by the interest shown in the players by a number of clubs, regardless of the fact that Gillingham are still in a lowly position.

"Players are putting in very good performances and so naturally they are going to command a lot of interest," said the manager.

A lot of clubs have been keeping a close watch on players like Gordon Riddick, *Brian Yeo, Derek Woodley and* Mel Machin.

"But," said Mr. Hayward. "We don't want to be forced into selling any of them."

Among clubs linked with Gillingham players are Swindon and Reading.

Mr. Hayward's search for players took him again to Bournemouth recently where transfer-listed winger, Ken Pound, has revived the interest he has had in him for some time.

"I would like to have him at Priestfield Stadium but the money has got to be available," said Mr. Hayward.

ONE DEFEAT

Walsall, who lost 1—0 at Luton on Saturday, boast an impressive home record that shows only one league defeat from 11 matches — five matches have been won and five drawn.

Outside-right Ken Stephens, signed from West Brom for a reported £15,000 fee and who made his first team debut on Saturday, is expected to be in the line-up to oppose Gillingham.

The Walsall line-up is expected to be: Bob Wesson, goal, previously with Coventry City; Frank Gregg, came up from the Walsall junior side together with full-back partner, Mike Evans.

The half-backs, Nick Atthey, Stan Jones and Stan Bennett, are also products of Walsall junior football.

Forwards: Ken Stephens; Derek Trevis, signed from Colchester during the close season; Dave Wilson, Jimmy McMorran and Geoff Morris, another player from junior football.

Basil—'No worries'

ALTHOUGH one or two Gillingham players are "a bit sore" as a result of Tuesday's game, manager Basil Hayward said today that he had no fitness worries. The team for Saturday's match at home to Hartlepools is expected to be chosen from the same players who travelled to Walsall.

A dedicated fan with fund-raising ideas...

LACK of money is the root of most evils at Priestfield Stadium. Having established that, the obvious question is : How do we raise more money? The Evening Post believes it has found the answer—a man who has the knack of raising money for other people, Harold France.

Recently he donated a cheque to the Mr. Pastry-Evening Post Swimming Pool Fund on behalf of his company, Aburound Ltd., the Gillingham-based football pool promoters.

He has no private axe to grind. He is not seeking glory, but Harold France is a dedicated football fan and he is dedicated to Gillingham FC.

Harold, chairman of the Blue and Whites, one of the supporters' groups, is a super optimist. And optimism could be life-blood to Gillingham as they battle for Third Division survival.

"Don't get me wrong," he told me, "I'm not looking for a job. But I like to devote my free time to Gillingham FC.

"Given a free hand with the organisation of the club pool, I honestly feel that I can double the club's £100 income in two months, and then, providing I get the required support, the opportunities are endless."

Harold France is also a man who speaks his mind. He has some strong words to say about so-called supporters.

"The time has come for these people to stop knocking the board of directors and the manager," he said. "These are men who are doing their best with the material and finances available."

Harold suggests to the knockers: "Let's get together." His idea is to stage a public meeting to discuss the problems of Gillingham Football Club. The Evening Post supports this idea, and pledges support to the club.

"I would be prepared to answer any questions regarding fund-raising," said Harold. "But the directors would have to be present to speak on club policy."

Harold has several ideas he would like to see operating, but so many of them depend on support from the fans.

He recently organised a crowd census at Priestfield Stadium, as a result of which letters were sent out to all the fans questioned. The letter pleaded for support, financial and otherwise, and 150 replies offered help and expressed interest.

This week, committee members of the Blue and Whites made follow-up calls on some of the 150 interested fans.

In just one night of canvassing, 100 tickets were sold and nine people joined the Blue and Whites Association, thus promising further support.

"If necessary we shall knock on every door in the Towns," said Harold. "If current trends are anything to go by, raising £350-£400 a week will be no trouble at all."

He feels that the present fund-raising set-up is confusing. When people are confronted with two separate organisations, they tend to think that their money is going to such and such a group, and not to the club.

"This thought, impression — call it what you like — tends to rub off on all concerned and we get the gulf widened instead of closed completely.

"The sufferer at all times is the one we are all supposed to be assisting. I believe that all fund-raising should be under the same banner.

"With what experience I have, and on the terms I have suggested, I would be prepared to have a go at this.

"I feel it is high time that everyone went on the **OFFENSIVE** rather than the **DEFENSIVE** in all matters, particularly with fund-raising.

"There is no thought of monetary reward in my intentions or suggestions and this, I know, is the attitude of scores of supporters within the club.

"There are the professional collectors, but commission allowable under the Small Lotteries Act is so small that anyone assisting must be doing so for the love of sport, and our club in particular, and there are many of these people still available."

Methods of disposing of tickets vary. They are for sale in pubs, shops, or supporters or agents distribute them to their friends.

Harold feels the first method is hit and miss. "With all due respect to the gallant few, they are probably far too busy to really 'sell' the goods we offer and it is a case of 'by the Grace of God' and someone actually asking for them.

"This is where regular visits to clubs and pubs by a team of 'mini-girls' could do a terrific amount of good."

Harold also feels that the players can help in fund-raising by personal appearances at pubs and clubs in the area.

"Two schools of thought which exist are: the hardcore of supporters who are interested in fund-raising, and those interested in winning a prize.

"The second school of thought has the vote in my book, for in this category there are thousands of prospective members who would pay the necessary for the chance of winning a substantial cash prize.

"But they will not come to us—we must take the offensive."

Let's all try to get the Gills on their feet again. We can all do our part, and if you want to assist write to Harold France, c/o The Evening Post, 58, High Street, Chatham.

Yesterday in our series on what can be done to boost the image of Gillingham FC, we spotlighted Coventry City and what had been achieved for them by a few dedicated men. Today's article is about a man who feels he could do a lot to increase the Gills' finances and restore confidence in the club. The man is HAROLD FRANCE (right).

The Post puts the questions, Dr. Grossmark answers . . .

TO find out what Dr. C. S. Grossmark, chairman of Gillingham FC, thought of the problems confronting the club, we went to his home in Maidstone Road, Chatham, to put some questions to him. We found him to be a sincere football fan, not without a sense of humour — a quality to be admired in the present circumstances.

Several of the ideas we outlined in the first article on Coventry City appealed to the doctor and he agreed they were worth considering. Here are the questions w put to him, and his answers :

EVENING POST: Do you not agree that it would be a good idea if the board of directors of Gillingham F.C. visited Coventry to see the set-up and to talk to the men who helped make a dream come true?

Doctor: With Mr. Freddie Cox, Mr. V. Chance, our land agent, and Mr. W. Waterman, the then honorary organiser of the club pool, I visited Coventry City F.C. four years ago. We always look behind the scenes at each ground we visit.

Do you agree that a successful club is largely dependent upon a good chairman?

Yes—It depends on one's interpretation of "a good chairman."

Do you agree that the modern football fans must be cosseted, and that no longer can we expect them to come along purely to watch football?

Yes—because of certain recent general social and economic trends.

Is it not true that an offer was made to you regarding the club's car park—an idea which would guarantee bringing in £7,000 a year?

A proposition was put to the board to use the car park as a market. The income or profit, if any, could not be assessed.

The idea was thoroughly investigated by our land agent. It is doubtful if planning permission would have been forthcoming.

The rise in the rates was glossed over by the proposer, extensive damage would have been done to the surface and an intolerable nuisance caused to our good neighbours. The proposal was rejected for those reasons.

Do you agree that "the surest way to lasting success" is a well-organised football pool?

Yes. You are probably unaware that the Coventry City football pool was heavily subsidised by a director in the first place. It should also be pointed out that Coventry has the highest industrial wage rate in the country and the working population is densely grouped in factories.

Do you not agree that the present set-up at Gillingham, with two supporters' associations working against each other, is farcical?

Your premise is incorrect. The supporting organisations do not work against each other. They are complementary to one another.

The Supporters' Association runs a pool and manages the catering at the ground. The Blue and Whites excel at social functions, in organising travel to away matches and in helping with the sale of Golden Goal tickets on match days. There is no overlap and no duplication of expense.

Do you agree that the public address system at the ground can be livened up to entertain the crowd before the game?

We are lucky to have the voluntary help of a professional master-of-ceremonies, Mr. Ray Wade, at all first team matches, and I think he does a very good job.

Do you agree that it would be a reasonable idea for a club song to be written, recorded by the players and copies sold at matches?

This idea has already been tried. Club songs will not improve the gates or the mood of the supporters.

Are you in favour of advertising and public relations?

Yes. We are grateful for the proffered help of the Evening Post with match publicity.

Could not youngsters be invited to the ground, treated to crisps and lemonade and be given the chance to meet their heroes?

I don't think crisps and lemonade are good for youngsters (or anybody else). We do welcome them to the ground during their school holidays when they watch the training. They have on occasions helped on the ground in bad weather.

Do you agree that it would be possible to give the club a new image, by drastic steps if necessary—e.g. by changing the name of the club to Medway United thereby letting the people of Rochester and Chatham also have a sense of having their "own team?"

No. The people of Rochester and Chatham already make up a goodly proportion of our support. Tradition matters, not gimmicks.

Do you agree that it is the job of the manager to be half-way man between the board room and the dressing room?

Yes.

Could the Vice-Presidents' Club of Coventry be applied to Gillingham in a smaller way?

We have tried this too.

Couldn't entertainment on away matches be better organised?

I don't know what you mean. Our following dropped to eight for the visit to Walsall, and you can't play bingo with eight people.

FACES FROM THE PAST

CAN anyone identify this team? The photo was kindly loaned to us by Bert Shardlow, of 126 Rosemary Avenue, Minster, Sheppey, and if you are not a real Gillingham supporter you might have some difficulty.

CAN Gillingham FC escape the big drop? The feeling in the boardroom and on the field is that they can collect the one point per game, which, it is reckoned, they need to avoid relegation.

What happens if they don't and they find themselves in Division Four? Some say it would do the team good to have a season in the Fourth, and that a drop has proved to be a blessing in disguise to many other clubs.

But let us not be pessimistic. Let us look forward — to SUCCESS.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

The Club

In our series on Gillingham F.C., we have tried to outline what is wrong and what could be done to put things right. We have avoided the easy way out, a way that would have been popular in some circles. We have not said: "Sack the Board and the Manager and start again."

We do not believe this would be the solution. Businessmen can do nothing without money.

But if there is blame to be apportioned to the Board, it is for allowing a situation to deteriorate.

The Evening Post last night said Mr. Harold France was prepared to take over all fund-raising. Dr. C. S. Grossmark, chairman of the club, has accepted that offer. "I would be only too pleased if Mr. France would help us out," he said.

Dr. Grossmark agreed that the surest way to lasting success was a well-organised football pool, but he pointed out that at Coventry the pool was heavily subsidised by a director to get it off the ground. Dr. Grossmark also said that Coventry had the highest industrial wage rate in the country and the working population was densely grouped in factories.

The Post takes the point, but argues that there are 10,000 people alone working in the Dockyard, and if all these workers gave one shilling a week to the football club, it amounts to a lot of cash. But these workers must be made to feel part of the club.

Pre-match entertainment is in the hands of Mr. Ray Wade. The doctor is satisfied with the way Mr. Wade entertains the crowd over the public address system.

While not wishing to detract from the good work Mr. Wade is doing, we suggest thought should be given to displays on the ground before the players came out.

We suggested that a club song could be written, and even recorded by the players, and sold on the ground. Dr. Grossmark was not enthusiastic, saying that a club song would not improve the gates or the mood of the supporters.

We disagree.

On away match entertainment, the doctor said: "Our following dropped to eight for the visit to Walsall, and you can't play bingo with eight people!"

But surely the point is: Why were there only eight people travelling to support a team with a potential following of at least 50,000?

We have put forward ideas. It is now up to the club.

If, indeed, there is dead wood on the Board, let us burn it now, before it is too late.

The supporters

Dr. Grossmark holds the view, quite rightly, that it is not only up to him to perform the life-saving operation. It is the task of everyone who wants to see top-line soccer in the Medway Towns.

And that surely means a sizeable proportion of the 1½ million population of Kent.

The immediate task is to keep the side in the Third Division. Dr. Grossmark and Basil Hayward realise this is their problem.

But we can make it easier. We can go and shout for the team, showing the players that we do care.

Let's have 10,000 people at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow for the game against Northampton.

Impossible? Ridiculous! Your overcoat is hanging in the hall. Put it on, stir your bones, pick up your rattle, grab a throat lozenger and SHOUT!

The Post

The Post is prepared to help the club. We think it would be wrong to sit on the sidelines prophesying disaster. We, too, want to be part of a revitalised Gillingham Football Club.

That is why we are offering free advertising to the club.

We are prepared to publish advertisements telling the people of the Medway Towns when and where matches are being played, and what social functions are being organised for the club.

We will put the creative ability of our design department at the disposal of the club. We will help design posters, programmes—in fact, anything that will create interest in the Gills.

DR. C. S. GROSSMARK

THE

MR. A. E. WELLER

MEN

MR. J. W. LEECH

ON

MR. S. H. MARTIN

THE

MR. G. WRIGHT

BOARD

MR. C. A. L. COX also serves on the Board, but he was unavailable to be photographed.

Gills' big need

I HAVE read with interest the various letters relating to the Gills. As a regular supporter I can find sympathy with views expressed by each of the writers.

However, the greatest need at the moment is surely for all those interested in football to rally round the Gills and give them support and encouragement.

They are not playing half as badly as their league position suggests, and most of the games have been well worth watching.

I am sure that Mr. Hayward has done his utmost in his quest for new players and in striving to find the best combination with those at his disposal. He needs all our encouragement.

True, the team appears to be over-endowed with half backs, but in fairness, Riddick was used very successfully by Luton as an inside-forward. Terry Simpson has also impressed as an inside-forward when used by the Gills in that role.

Good forwards are in constant demand and Mr. Hayward has been unfortunate in not securing the services of several useful forwards when he has chased all over the country.

Three or four of the players are constantly named by supporters as special favourites, and I would certainly not disagree with the champions of Mel Machin, Bill Williams, Derek Woodley and John Simpson.

But for sheer hard work, skill and ability to get the ball in the net I must nominate Brian Yeo as worthy of special mention.

He has given many of us much pleasure with his goals and with the right partners, this player would dominate the goal-scorers of the division.

Good luck Gills!—

V. E. GLADWIN,
12, Alexandra Avenue, Gillingham.

FANS EAGER TO HELP THEIR HOME TEAM

A CROWD of football fans at Chatham's Central Hall were watching a match between Manchester United and Benfica.

A tense, exciting game, the final of last year's European Cup played at Wembley. But these fans were thinking of another, humbler team — Gillingham — hovering at the foot of the Third Division.

Thanks to Harold France, chairman of the Blue and Whites — Gillingham FC Supporters' Association — and the Mini girls, who handed out more than 1,200 leaflets, the fans who were at last night's showing of European Cup highlights know that the Gills need help and support.

This was the second time that the Shell company had presented the European Cup football film in Chatham, and it was as successful last night as it was the first time.

However, this time the show also publicised the need for support to the home town club Gillingham.

Leaflets given to the public said that gates had slumped at Priestfield which meant that very little cash was available. People were asked to help in any way they could to enable Gillingham to get enough money for new players and other extras.

Pictures by James Bell

Probably a greater success than the football film were the 10 Blue and White mini-skirted girls who mingled with the audience giving out the leaflets.

Footballers from Chatham Town, the local Kent League team, made a brief appearance on the stage along with the team mascots of Gillingham FC.

After the film a collection was made of £7 and 137 replies were received to the leaflet asking for helpers for the association.

"Each and every one of those who replied to the leaflet will be contacted," said Mr. France.

GILLINGHAM goalkeeper John Simpson pictured with two fans, Sheila Dennis and Josie Markham, both members of the Supporters' Association.

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Tottenham	15	12	0	3	41	16	24
Fulham	13	11	1	1	43	16	23
Arsenal	13	9	4	0	35	9	22
Crystal P.	15	10	2	3	24	17	22
Ipswich T.	14	7	3	4	40	23	17
Q.P.R.	12	7	3	2	28	16	17
Norwich C.	13	5	6	2	34	18	16
West Ham	14	4	8	2	21	16	16
Bristol C.	12	7	1	4	24	16	15
Cardiff C.	13	6	2	5	18	19	14
Bristol R.	16	6	2	8	26	36	14
Birmingham	15	6	1	8	28	25	13
GILLINGHAM	12	5	3	4	12	14	13
Plymouth	15	5	3	7	15	20	13
Oxford U.	13	5	3	5	19	26	13
Southampton	12	6	0	6	16	9	12
Chelsea	13	5	2	6	25	23	12
Walsall	12	4	3	5	21	22	11
Leicester C.	12	5	1	6	20	24	11
Swansea T.	14	2	6	6	20	33	10
Northampton	14	3	2	9	17	34	8
Reading	14	3	2	9	19	41	8
Peterborough	13	1	5	7	10	25	7
Bournemouth	13	1	4	8	14	27	6
Luton T.	13	1	4	8	11	39	6
Swindon T.	13	2	1	10	11	30	5

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

Millwall	19	17	2	0	83	21	36
Ipswich	18	15	3	0	62	16	33
Orient	17	12	5	0	57	21	29
Q.P.R.	18	11	4	3	48	24	26
Charlton	19	10	5	4	45	24	25
Crystal P.	20	11	1	8	50	42	23
Tottenham	19	9	2	8	51	26	20
Chelsea	18	7	2	9	40	37	16
West Ham	20	5	6	9	26	47	16
Colchester	20	6	3	11	28	58	15
Fulham	16	6	2	8	21	28	14
Luton	19	4	6	9	36	46	14
Reading	21	5	4	12	32	73	14
Watford	16	5	2	9	24	46	12
Brighton	19	4	2	13	26	49	10
GILLINGHAM	16	3	1	12	13	34	7
Oxford U.	17	0	2	15	8	61	2

Bailey asks for a move

SHOCK for Gillingham manager Basil Hayward at the end of last week when Ray Bailey asked to be placed on the transfer list.

The 24-year-old wing-half, who was with Mr. Hayward at Bedford Town and is in his fourth season at the Stadium, had a talk with the Gills' boss and his reason for wanting a move was that he was unable to command a first team place.

Bailey, who plays County Championship cricket with Northamptonshire, was a regular member of the side until this season. During the close season he had a cartilage operation and has since failed to recapture his previous form.

Just when he was getting back on top he received a face injury in the match at Reading in October.

Mr. Hayward told the Chatham Standard: "Mel Machin and Terry Simpson are playing quite well and Ray is second choice to them at the moment until he proves that he is playing better than either of them.

"It is something a player has to accept, especially in a short space of time he has been out of the side. It is just one of those things," added the Gills' boss.

No change for tomorrow's vital game

THE visit of Hartlepools United to Priestfield Stadium tomorrow (Saturday) and the trip to Shrewsbury next Saturday were described as vital by Gillingham manager Basil Hayward, yesterday.

Both teams accompany the Gills in the lower region of the table and if the Stadium club wishes to free itself of a relegation threat then points must be taken from both encounters.

But Mr. Hayward's immediate concern is the visit of the Northern club tomorrow. It will be Hartlepools' first visit for some seasons — they were promoted from Division 4 this term — and they currently hold one spot above Gillingham in the league table by one point and an inferior goal average.

Shrewsbury, with a game in hand, are one point behind the Gills. They will be eager to wipe out the memory of the 4—1 trouncing at the Stadium in November but Gillingham will be keen to repeat the 2—1 success at Gay Meadow last season.

Saturday's workmanlike performance in defeating Northampton 2—0 for the club's first double of the season was encouraging. But a setback to the table-climb came three days later with a 2—1 defeat by Walsall at Fellows Park.

It was an unchanged line-up that went to Walsall and with no injury problem at the Stadium yesterday, Mr. Hayward is expected to make no change for the visit of Hartlepools.

Probable Gillingham line-up tomorrow is: John Simpson, Tony Weston, Mike Green, Terry Simpson, Bill Williams, Mel Machin, Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Gordon Riddick, Andy Smillie and John Meredith.

Brian Yeo's late penalty at Walsall took his season's goal tally to 16 which equals the number netted by top scorer last season, Brian Gibbs, who is now with Colchester United.

Mr. Hayward's confidence in his team is also reflected by the interest shown in several players by a number of other clubs and the Gills' boss said: "Players are putting in very good performances and so naturally they are going to command a lot of interest."

NOT SO HAPPY

But while the Gill[s]
boss is pleased with his
displays at home he is
[not] happy with performan[ces]
[on opp]onents' grounds.
"Our football is go[od]

while we create the chances up front they are not being taken away from home. We might have to change our pattern for away games and play it tighter.

"This is something I don't really want to do. I feel the players who turn in good performances at home are capable of doing the same away from home. But at the moment things are not going well for us," he said.

Mr. Hayward was full of praise for the display given by the Reserves on Tuesday in their 2—2 draw with a Q.P.R. side that included first team players, Ron Springett, Alan Harris, Tony Hazel, Alan Wilks, Keith Sanderson and Barry Bridges.

Tomorrow, the Reserves have a Football Combination visit to Peterborough and the Youth team travel to Millwall in the South East Counties League.

Gillingham have re-arranged their postponed Football Combination fixtures with Chelsea and Bristol City. Chelsea visit the Stadium on Wednesday and Bristol City are at the Stadium the following Wednesday (12 February). Both matches will have a 7.30 p.m. kick-off.

EASTER TRIP

The Blue and Whites Association intend to organize a trip for Gills' fans to take in the Easter holiday matches at Oldham on Good Friday (4 April) and at Mansfield the following day.

Supporters would leave the Towns on the Friday morning, staying overnight in the Manchester area and travelling to Mansfield the following day. Cost will be £4 4s., including bed and breakfast, or £2 for the trip only.

On the Monday, Gillingham will complete their Easter programme with a home match against Barrow.

FOCUS ON GILLINGHAM'S OPPONENTS

Hartlepools' stern test to stay up

JUBILATION at Hartlepools' promotion to the Third Division this season is gradually wearing thin, and it is well conceded on all sides that the club will have a gigantic task to stay up.

They started the season none too badly, in fact, but slipped in several home games which yielded only a point when they should have been good enough for two.

They are now feeling the brunt of those early failures, and have not been helped by a spate of injuries and recent disappointing results.

Like any struggling club Hartlepools have been crippled by lack of cash. They deservedly finished in the top four last season—the first time they had won any tangible honours in their 60 years' existence.

Difference

And there was no surplus for manager Gus McLean, presently confined to bed with flu, to go out and buy a couple of experienced players that would surely have made all the difference between at least a middle of the table position and the present one just a point above Gillingham, but with an extra match played.

Make no mistake about it. Gillingham will not find goals easy to come by. The Hartlepools defence is a useful one with sturdy and capable full-backs in Brian Drysdale and Tony Bircumshaw, and a fine middle man in John Gill.

The big problem with the side has been the lack of a goalscoring forward. A couple of months ago they signed Malcolm Thompson from Goole Town, but while he has added considerable strength to the line the fact is that he has scored only one league goal in seven outings.

Absence

Leading scorer Peter Blowman, who has scored seven, returned after an abscence of three weeks against Southport last Friday, but he got few chances as Hartlepools were handsomely outplayed to the tune of three goals.

However, there is no real cause for despondency yet and manager Gus McLean has no time for the pessimists who say that the team is destined for a quick return to the Fourth Division.

Hartlepools have played some of their best football of the season away from home, highspot of their programme being a splendid 2-1 victory over Barrow on January 11. They could give Gillingham a severe shake-up, but probably will be more than pleased if they come away with a point.

Order of the day—2 points

GILLINGHAM, needing a point a game to avoid the big drop into the Fourth Division, should boost their average tomorrow by taking the full quota from fellow strugglers Hartlepools at Priestfield Stadium.

Manager Basil Hayward has announced an unchanged team for this vital clash.

The whole team are fit and determined to produce a good performance in front of their long-suffering supporters.

Since the EVENING POST pointed out that Gillingham needed a point a game to avoid relegation, they have kept up with their target with a home win against Northampton last Saturday followed by a disappointing defeat at Walsall on Tuesday.

Gillingham's position is still perilous. They are third from bottom of the Third Division with 21 points from 27 games, Hartlepools are one place higher with 22 points.

And the team immediately below the Gills, Shewsbury, although on

CARL GILBERT

20 points, have a game in hand.

With the bottom four teams relegated it looks like developing into a last-gasp scramble to avoid the drop.

Oldham in bottom spot with only 13 points appear to have their place already booked.

Today the Priestfield Road pitch, which has been cut up badly in recent games because of prolonged wet weather, was looking much better and only heavy in the middle.

It has been 16 years since the Gills' boss last came into contact with Hartlepools. He played against them for Port Vale. Basil knew their manager, Angus McLean as an opponent wh[en] McLean played for Wolverhampton.

Carl Gilbert, who had such a good game at centre-forward against Queens Park Rangers Reserves in Monday's Combination match seems to be heading for a first team game. But not yet — "Yeo and Riddick are both playing well" said Mr. Hayward.

Team: John Simpson; Weston, Green, Terry Simpson, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey or Quirke.

Face-saver direct from corner

GILLS TASK MADE HARDER

Gillingham 2, Hartlepool 2

GILLINGHAM made their task to get away from the lower region of the table even harder when they could only take a point from rival relegation candidates, Hartlepool, at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday... **writes TERRY OWEN.**

Maximum points at home and a point from away matches is the Gills' target to avoid the drop in league status. But after looking confident of achieving their target they were fortunate in the end to avoid defeat.

It took a goal direct from a corner kick, just six minutes from the end, to give Gillingham a face-saving point after Hartlepool had snatched a lead goal in the 81st. minute in a rare breakaway attack.

After the match Gills' manager Basil Hayward told me: "Why we should lose confidence before our home crowd I cannot understand. The match certainly showed we will have to have some more running and imagination from the players."

With midfield men Terry Simpson and Andy Smillie unable to set things up, strikers Gordon Riddick and Brian Yeo struggled against Hartlepool's massed defence which flooded the penalty area at the slightest sign of danger.

All-out attack in the second half, as Hartlepool fell back to hold on grimly to a 1-1 scoreline, scarcely made a dent in the northern club's defensive armour in which pivot John Gill, who was Bill Williams' rival for the centre-half berth in their Mansfield days, held his defence together superbly.

Gillingham's close passing game all too often came unstuck against quick tackling defenders and more imagination would have been the order of the day had they brought wingers Derek Woodley and John Meredith, both fast running and capable of taking their full-backs, more into the game.

QUIETEST GAME

Goal-scoring chances were at a premium as midfield promise turned into soccer stalemate but while Hartlepool threatened occasionally, 'keeper John Simpson had his quietest game for many months — especially in the second half.

Desperation crept into Gillingham's play late in the second half but with limited striking power, the northerners held out for a deserved point, if only for the way they took their two only chances and a great defensive performance.

Gillingham's defence, generally in command of the situation, made two fatal mistakes that cost them two goals.

But this match only emphasized that the Stadium team must find more devil and fight if they hope to work their way from the danger zone, and Mr. Hayward has a tough task ahead to instil imagination in approach work for the season's remaining weeks.

The game's first scoring attempt fell to Hartlepool after six minutes when right-back Tony Bircumshaw over-lapped on the wing and saw his first-time drive taken by Simpson.

Gillingham, who had a shaky start during which passes went astray, especially from Terry Simpson, broke clear a minute later, Woodley's free-kick was headed down by Sheridan straight to the feet of Smillie who volleyed over.

Hartlepool covered well at the back but they broke accurately and nearly snatched a 14th. minute lead. It was Tony Weston who came to the rescue after Simpson pushed the ball down in to the goal area but the full-back moved smartly to clear from the challenging Thompson.

Gillingham snatched the lead in the 22nd. minute when they beat the visitors' off-side trap. It was Green and Smillie who set up the move for **TERRY SIMPSON** to race through unchallenged as Hartlepool vainly appealed for off-side, and the wing half coolly walked the ball round the advancing Joe Gill to roll it into the empty net.

Four minutes later Gills had the ball in the net again. Woodley, who had sent two crosses behind, saw his centre punched out by 'keeper Gill straight to Weston who kneed the ball forward for Yeo to crash into the net, only for a "goal" to be disallowed for offside.

But in the 30th minute the teams were on level terms — the result of slack Gillingham marking. Young took a left wing corner and centre-forward **MALCOLM THOMPSON,** who moved well throughout the match, positioned himself close to the near post and glanced the ball home.

A minute later a Machin mistake, something rare from the polished Gills' wing half who otherwise had an outstanding game, almost let the visitors in when Blowman saw his flick forward just miss the outstretched boot of Cummings and Bill Williams cleared the danger in the goal area.

Yeo had a header comfortably taken by 'keeper Gill and two minutes before the interval whistle, Mike Green beat defenders and saw his diving header from Meredith's corner kick gathered on the line by Gill.

Gillingham were all at sea in the early stages of the second half. The visitors monopolized the midfield play but were unable to mount attacks as Green and Weston effectively shut out wingers Parry and Young, and Williams and Machin policed the middle.

It was Green again who went close to putting Gillingham in front in the 52nd. minute when he rose high to meet a Woodley free-kick and saw his header pass over the bar.

Attacking play for the remainder of the half belonged to the home side but while approach work was neat it lacked penetration to make any effect on the tight-marking Hartlepool defence.

Gill smartly saved a Woodley low drive and from the corner, Simpson was inches wide with a powerful low shot. Later, Riddick went up for a Woodley free-kick and headed past an upright.

DOWNWARD HEADER

Gillingham were unable to create chances and it was not until the 75th. minute that the Hartlepool goal was again threatened. This time luck was on Gill's part as Riddick saw his downward header rebound from the goalkeeper's knees.

Gillingham appeals for a penalty in the 78th. minute were turned down by referee Mr. T. W. Dawes (Norwich) when left-half Goad appeared to handle in the box. But three minutes later the Gills were rocked back on their heels.

In a rare Hartlepool attack Weston and Williams appeared to leave the ball for each other when Parry sent a cross into the area. Simpson spotted the danger, advanced from his goal, but the unmarked **BOBBY CUMMINGS** was on hand to fire home.

With just nine minutes remaining Gillingham threw everything into attack. Yeo finished off a Smillie-Riddick move with a shot that was saved at full length by Gill and then Simpson tried a high lob that went over.

But in the 84th. minute came the equalizing goal. **DEREK WOODLEY,** who had switched wings with John Meredith, saw his curling corner kick drop into the packed goalmouth and an on-the-spot Mr. Dawes ruled the ball had crossed the line.

In a last bid effort to snatch both points the Gills forced three successive corners but were unable to clinch the all-important goal.

Gillingham: Simpson (J), Weston, Green, Simpson (T), Williams, Machin, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith. Substitute: Bailey.

Hartlepool: Joe Gill; Bircumshaw, Drysdale, Sheridan, John Gill, Goad, Parry, Blowman, Thompson, Cummings, Young. Substitute: Atkinson.

Attendance: 4,785.

Four minutes after Gillingham had snatched the lead against Hartlepool Brian Yeo crashes the ball past 'keeper Joe Gill only to have a "goal" disallowed for off-side. R.546

Gillingham's Mike Green moved sharply through the Hartlepool defence to meet a Meredith corner on Saturday but saw his diving header taken by 'keeper, Joe Gill. R.543

Basil Hayward's Own Column

PLAYERS MUST RUN A LOT HARDER

SATURDAY'S performance in only being able to pick up one point against Hartlepool was disappointing. In our present position we just cannot afford to lose anything at home.

Supporters know that the team has the talent to produce good results — this has already been proved on several occasions this season — and quite honestly I do not want to change the set up of a basically attacking side into an ultra-defensive formation.

If this was forced on me then I would have to go out for two different type of players. Obviously we have now got to play it that much tighter at the back, not conceding two simple goals as we did on Saturday, and break much quicker into attack.

At the beginning of the week I did say that I just couldn't understand why the team had lost their confidence at home against Hartlepool. This prompted a supporter to ask me if some of the first team pool would play for the Reserves against Chelsea on Wednesday in a bid to regain confidence.

None of the players were included in the team that met Chelsea. I feel football is so much different in the second team and does not present the tension of Division Three matches.

I readily admit that the present league table position does indicate there is a danger of going down but, as I have said before, the players have the ability to finally see Gillingham finish in a mid-table position at the end of the season.

I am confident the team will climb out of trouble but more effort must be put into the game to clinch the vital points we are missing. Saturday's display was unaccountable because the players had the crowd behind them — as they have had throughout the season.

Now they have got to run a lot harder, use more imagination and force the breaks to run their way.

Basil wants more effort

DISAPPOINTED Gillingham manager Basil Hayward, when he discussed with his team today how to put right Saturday's mistakes, called for extra effort from the players.

"It was a big disappointment," he said this morning. "The problem, as in the match against Walsall, was our performance around our own penalty area."

He remained optimistic about the future. "We have got everything it takes to stay up. All we need is an extra bit of grit. The team lacked confidence throughout the match; in fact, even after we went ahead, we did not settle down. It was a bad game to watch and bad from our point of view.

"But it is no good falling out with each other. We have now got to get together and do something for the supporters. They have been very tolerant and there has only been the odd barracker."

Mr. Hayward said he would be considering whether to make changes later in the week.

Terry Simpson pulled a muscle and will have a fitness test later in the week.

Although it appeared that Brian Yeo was handicapped by an injury in Saturday's game, he had, in fact, a split boot and had trouble to keep it on towards the end.

● Oxford United sent a scout to watch Gillingham for the third successive game on Saturday. They are believed to be specially interested in Yeo and [illegible] consistent Mel Mach[illegible].

Think of money

HALF-AN-HOUR. That's all that the Blue and White Supporters Association are requesting from supporters of Gillingham Football Club. At home matches, the association's mini girls are distributing circulars asking fans to help the club's finances by selling 10 draw tickets each week — only half-an-hour's work. If only 1,500 fans accomplished this, the club would be richer by £300 a week. Think about it.

VISITING goalkeeper Joe Gill—a busy man after the break—clears from centre-half B. N. Williams' sortie.

Hartlepool right-back, Tony Bircumshaw, wins this heading duel with Gillingham's Brian Yeo on Saturday. R.544

Gillingham's Terry Simpson turns away from the Hartlepool goal on Saturday after putting his side 1-0 ahead. Simpson latched onto a through pass and rounded the 'keeper before pushing the ball home. R.545

HARTLEPOOL escape again as three players go down in a heap during a second half Gillingham raid headed by defender Mike Green (centre), whose headwork was often used to good effect.

I question Basil Hayward's estimate of the attendance

IN BASIL HAYWARD'S WEEKLY column he says he cannot help smiling when he reads remarks by people who profess to know enough about football to tell him what the game is all about.

I cannot believe he is serious about this, especially if one looks at the results obtained over the last two and a half seasons...what a sense of humour!

He comments: "When I came here gates were down to the 5000 mark." Surely the Directors must take him to task for an error of 5000? The gates at that time were averaging 10,000, Mr. Hayward.

Agreed, a few were disillusioned, but only because the Directors showed that by letting Mr. Cox go they lowered their sights from Division Two.

But how many more than that are disillusioned now? At least 6000, Mr. Hayward. You say when you came to the Stadium you had to change things. Well, you certainly have!

E. Taylor.

Ingram Road,
Gillingham.

MR. KEVIN DOWNS introduces goalie John Simpson to the audience at the football film show.

'WE'RE BACKING THE GILLS'

BACKING the Gills all the way are these four young lads from Wigmore—Richard Barrett (12), of Bredhurst Road, Richard Goodman (13), of Fairview Avenue, Philip Harris (12), of Fairview Avenue, and Raymond Nunney (12), also from Bredhurst Road. They are seen, left to right, in our picture. What the club needed, they decided, was more support. So they began to look for supporters in the local area. They wrote nearly 200 letters and delivered them by hand in the neighbourhood and drew nearly 30 posters advertising Saturday's match against Hartlepool. "It's just one of those bad seasons, and we're doing our best to help the team out of it," they all agreed.

Soccer Theory

ONCE again, at Gillingham F.C.'s last home match, we saw the effect of a team with two attacking wingers. Allowing for the loss of one player, surely nobody watching this game could pretend that the Gills would have *won*. The result might not have been as bad, but I have no doubt at all that Watford would have won.

This formation of five forwards, for the second time in weeks, just tore up the defensive ideas that the Gills have displayed this season. One may ask, does this type of play bring dividends for long? Well, the record of Watford shows the answer.

S. V. KNIGHTS

Blaker Avenue,
Rochester.

Relying on a Micawber philosophy

Not unforseen, the fortunes of Gillingham F.C. have now reached a low ebb and, equally predictably, everybody seems to be blaming everybody else.

The crisis at Gillingham is caused by a lack of money. The club's income is eaten up by day-to-day expenses and there is no surplus cash with which to make the much-needed improvements.

Supporters clamour for a clear-out in the Boardroom but, although the Directors should bear some responsibility for the present state of affairs, can anyone expect them to dig deep into their pockets and make loans to a bad investment risk?

And anyway, where are there new directors ready to come forward with the massive cash resources needed?

Ruling out loans, the extra money needed could come through the gates, but playing standards have become so low that gates have slumped. Manager Basil Hayward relies on the philosophy of Mr. Micawber — desperately waiting for something to turn up to bring the crowds back but, without money, standards cannot be improved and so the vicious circle continues.

FORTUNATE?

This leaves fund-raising, and here Gillingham F.C. are "fortunate" in having two supporters associations. It is a mixed blessing for, instead of trying jointly to win over an apathetic public, they seem content to squabble amongst themselves. To be fair, the Supporters Association do raise some money through their Daily Draw, but Harold France and his Blue and Whites seem to delight in half-finished schemes.

There seems to be far too much of personalities and "one-upmanship" between the two organizations and the club, which does no good at all.

Thus, crippled by lack of funds, rotted by apathy, torn by squabbling, Gillingham F.C. is heading straight into the jaws of the Fourth Division.

The only answer is for EVERYONE to forget differences, band together under one banner and launch a massive rescue operation before it is too late.

David Elligate,
137 Sturdee Avenue,
Gillingham.

It's not just a sporting life . . .

WHAT boy, of any age, has not at some time or another had a burning ambition to become an England footballer or the next Bobby Charlton?

And, coming to the material aspect of soccer, who hasn't thought what an easy job footballers have — collecting a full week's wage for ninety minutes work?

But training to be a footballer is not just a case of kicking a ball around for an hour and a half every Saturday — as any of the five apprentices at Gillingham Football Club would tell you. Each morning they report to the ground, not for a few press-ups and a run round the pitch, but to scrub the floors and sweep out the dressing rooms.

Then comes the weight lifting, running, jumping, kicking and heading and any other training exercises which trainer Jimmy Boswell may have thought up. Every Tuesday the players have an extensive session in the Brompton Barracks gymnasium.

NO 'DODDLE'

Friday, the day before match day, is probably their [illegible]st easiest, with just a few [illegible]rs, loosening up exercises.

Of course footballing has its attractive side. The money is good, particularly for an 18-year-old who has just signed professional forms, and if you've got ability, and not just luck, you can get right to the top.

"There is also the glamour of the game," said Geoff. "The good feeling you get when people recognize you in the street."

Then there is the way in which the club trains them for at least one other career, just in case they do not make the grade, or have to pull out because of injury.

All the apprentices spend one morning a week at Medway College of Technology studying either engineering or business.

Most of the apprentices at Gillingham came to the club after playing for Medway Boys, and so it is due to a large extent to their sports masters at school that they were "discovered."

And yet the first thing Jimmy Boswell and youth team manager, Bill Collins, did when the boys came to Priestfield Stadium wa[illegible]

Two of the apprentices at Gillingham Football Club, Geoff Bray (right) and Dick Tydeman in one of their more leisurely training stints at Priestfield Stadium. R502

Basil Hayward's Own Column

PLAYERS ARE AMBASSADORS

ALDERMAN Harold Smith's remark at Gillingham Council's General Purposes Committee last Thursday that Gillingham Football Club was "mediocre" was disgraceful.

To call any Football League club "mediocre" is ridiculous, especially a Third Division club. I wonder what his term would be for a club playing in the Fourth Division?

Ald. Smith was referring to a criticism I made a fortnight ago of the Council for its lack of support when I said it was interesting to note that councillors in the Towns were bending over backwards to retain county cricket at Gillingham which would attract no more than about 15,000 in the three days, with no mention of the football club which was capable of bringing into the Towns more than that figure in just one afternoon.

I still feel the council could help the Football Club with a loan towards ground development. It would not be the first time a local authority has helped out — only recently Hereford City Council loaned Southern League Hereford United £15,000 towards the cost of a new £26,000 stand.

Ald. Smith should realise that Gillingham F.C. can help Gillingham itself by bringing people into the town which would benefit the traders.

I feel that people voted into a responsible position should not try to take the rise out of someone's suggestion that can only do good for everyone concerned.

I certainly do not expect anyone who does give to get nothing from the Football Club — I expect them to get something back for it.

Perhaps Gillingham Council should realise that the name of Gillingham is respected throughout the country. The players are the town's ambassadors and their behaviour both on and off the pitch has brought nothing but admiration from many people.

Readers will probably be aware that Gillingham's name has been linked with players from other clubs. This is quite true, but while there are one or two players I would like to have in the line up we are unable to obtain them at the moment.

COMMANDED ATTENTION

At the same time several clubs have shown interest in some Gillingham players who have commanded attention because of their consistent form this season.

Obviously I do not want to part with anyone because, as I have said before, I do feel we are so near to being an outstanding side in the Third Division. We would be that much further back if the offers reached the height where it would be difficult to refuse and we had to part with players.

But players, like everyone else, are ambitious for themselves. It is understandable that they would want higher wages and who can blame them. I certainly don't.

Naturally players want to go up the scale but I would like to see them do just that at Gillingham and no-where else.

But the only way this can happen is by a continually growing support — a support that the area could provide.

I am grateful to the many people, other than the critics, who have wished the club every success in recent weeks. I have received letters which have provided useful help and to me this means they have the interest of the club at heart.

Although we went down by the odd goal at Walsall on Tuesday-night I feel that most supporters will agree tnat our performance against Northampton on Saturday was not the form of a team doomed to relegation.

Hayward answers the Post

Changes mean style switch

Q **YOU are third to bottom of the Third Division. What changes do you intend to make in order to get away from the relegation zone?**

A We are playing the right way to win matches at the moment. The only other way is to change round away from home and go for a point, instead of trying to get both as we are at the moment.

There is very little difference in the standard from top to bottom of the division, so I do not think the fact that we have played more of the top sides than those at the bottom has much to do with it. What is perhaps more relevant is that clubs in the top half have had a greater number of home games and those at the bottom, more matches away.

Q **What have you thought of the referees this season? Do you think some are more prone to send players off than others?**

A They have been the usual mixed bag, but this season we have appeared to be on the receiving end of their off-days.

I think one or two referees get carried away with the mood of the Press when they are not strong enough to control things themselves. It is a difficult job, but I believe they are a little to severe on certain unimportant things and not severe enough when they should be.

WATFORD'S ace goal-grabber Barry Endean in action at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday, when he collected a hat-trick in the Third Division leaders' 5—0 win. This time 'keeper John Simpson saved Endean's header. Other Gills in view are Mel Machin and Andy Smillie, with Mike Green on the line.

Dejected Hayward

AFTER watching the Gills' take their third five-goal beating this season, manager Basil Hayward must now be looking to tighten up the defence for the touch away clash with Walsall on Saturday and to instil something new in the players for the long haul back to respectability.

Now third from bottom, Gillingham are at their lowest ebb since coming into the Third Division and the fact that they have picked up only two points from their last six games puts them well among the relegation candidates. Since the 4—1 home win over Shrewsbury, Gillingham have only picked up three goals and conceded 17.

But, though there are king-sized problems at Priestfield Stadium, the team showed on Saturday that they are still capable of good football even against teams like top-of-the-table Watford.

The Hertfordshire club went on to swamp Gillingham in the second-half but it wasn't until about the 40th minute — well after Gillingham were down to ten men through Gordon Riddick being sent off — that they showed any real thrust and were given their first corner.

Utterly dejected by the way things turned out on Saturday, Mr. Hayward has a big job on his hands these days. But, he commented: "Before Gordon Riddick went off the field we looked quite capable of taking both points with a lot to spare.

"The players worked hard under atrocious conditions and had the better of the game," he said. "But we fell apart after we were down to 10 men."

The pitch was in one of its worst conditions for years and prolonged rain and frost created huge patches of mud. The whole of the centre circle, for instance, was completely void of grass.

The Gills' boss has no illusions about what has to be done with the team. But he can be slightly encouraged by the fact that the worst of the season is over and that Gillingham are at home for five of the next eight matches.

The manager has a difficult job

EVERYONE IS ENTITLED to his own opinion, but last week's correspondent on the Gills should make sure he has sound knowledge of the working of a professional football club.

Basil Hayward has stated time and time again why he cannot get the players he would like—lack of funds.

The money obtained from Crickmore and Gibbs has been used to pay the Club's expenses with regard to travelling, hotels and other commitments.

If we had sound support in the Towns, that money would have been used to buy the type of player who could draw even larger crowds.

THE SHIRTS

I think the Manager has a difficult task in an area which is not primarily sport-minded.

With regard to the shirts worn by the team, I cannot see that this has any bearing on the performance of the team at home or away.

Now is the time for the real sportsmen to put on their coats, rally round the team and make sure we do not drop into a worse position.

P. Brett,

Gillingham.

THE BLANK FACES OF THE NOISY

Why is it that frequently those who shout the loudest and longest in "Hear All Sides" lack the courage of their convictions?

I am fed up with these letter writers who criticize other people and haven't the guts to disclose their identity for publication.

I can understand a railwayman, a busman, policeman, or other public servants, whose job is at stake, wishing to remain anonymous.

But for a man who occupies the best part of a column in last week's paper to attack Mr. Basil Hayward and then hide his name I can think of no more suitable adjective than "Despicable."

BOB DAY,

54 Goddington Road,
Strood.

Enough of the excuses, says supporter

SO once again out come the excuses — it's either bad conditions, bad referees or that old favourite bad luck.

Will Mr. Hayward ever admit that Gillingham are a bad team. It's as simple as that!

At the beginning of the season Gillingham lost two forwards, Brown and Gibbs. What did we get as replacement? Two half-backs and a full-back with the result that Gillingham have one of the worst defences in the division.

So we come to the Watford match, and strangely enough, it was your headline which seems to typify the whole shoddy Gillingham set-up — "Impossible after Riddick's expulsion". The important word is impossible. What the devil was impossible about it? Good skilled football, which after all is what we are repeatedly being told Gillingham play could have and should have made the score much closer.

I remember not so long ago Barrow were playing here. Just before half-time they lost their goalkeeper. Yet with all the home advantage and the skilled football they played, they could score only three goals. On Saturday it was not a goalkeeper sent off, not a centre-half or a link man, but a centre-forward. Gillingham had their strongest defence playing, the goals were not against the run of play, all the defence were in the area, in position when the goals were scored.

Gillingham completely surrendered the match, they lost control of midfield, and never fought really hard for the ball but just sat back and waited for the inevitable. The great fight-back was limited to a few big boots upfield chased only by Yeo.

Year's gem

And what were the thoughts of Basil? Of course he blamed the defeat on Riddick being sent off. Then came the gem of the year. He did not send on the substitute because in his own words "all the players were working well."

Smillie, Folds and Woodty wandered about midfield as though they were lost. The defence just showed how badly they can play.

So come on Mr. Hayward give the supporters a bit of credit. We would all think much more of you and your team if, just once when Gillingham play badly, you will admit it and stop making excuses.

If Gillingham go down it will be the end of them for they will need a board of directors and a manager with much more courage and enterprise than those we have at present to achieve any substantial succes. — D. L. OSBORNE, 15 Northbourn Road, Gillingham.

The Gills have had bad luck

I read Jim Buck's "Don't blame the fans" letter in the Post with dismay and disgust. It was his usual criticism when support, not knocking, is required. Seen a game for a year or two, Jim?

The present team, in my opinion, are one of the best Gillingham have had in the last 15 years. Ask Tommy Docherty — remember the Rotherham game?

Having seen all the home games and all the away matches except two I think encouragement is required at the moment.

How many times have Gillingham hit the post this season? Remember the Reading game, the Plymouth game, the Bournemouth game?

How about injuries — notably Smillie?

I do feel also that Gillingham have had their share of bad match officials. Every team have their share, but Gillingham more so at the moment.

Things go well for you when the ball is running. When it is not you need encouragement, sympathy, support and loyalty. Come on you supporters, Gillingham FC need every one of you. — I. CARE (name and address spplied).

SPORTS EDITOR JOHN EVANS writes: Both correspondents seem to have over-stated their cases. Gillingham are not as black as Mr. Osborne paints them, not as white as "Mr. Care" suggests. The difference between good and bad remains only marginal, but they are in grave danger of relegation and bad luck stories, no matter how justified, cannot change that.

Club chairman Dr. C. S. Grossmark told me this week that he thinks the Gills will achieve their point-a-game target from now on and stay in the Third Division. But he added that the board would take steps to strengthen the team if at all possible.

The sooner they act the better to make sure the Gills avoid the big drop. But meantime, as the writer of the second letter suggests, the fans can help by cheering instead of accepting the situation with the silence that reigned at Priestfield on Saturday.

What are your views, supporters — air them in the POST. These columns are yours!

Will Yeo move on?

BRIAN YEO is wanted by Reading. Their manager, former Chelsea and England star Roy Bentley, confirmed today that he is about to make an offer for Gillingham's leading scorer — and a player the fans would hate to see leave the Medway Towns, writes JOHN WINTER.

"A bid is pending but it would not be for the best to reveal the figure we are to offer at this stage," said Mr. Bentley. But Reading's sources say that it may be in the region of £15,000.

Reading were originally known to be interested in both Yeo and Gordon Riddick, Gillingham's club captain and centre-forward who faces possible suspension after being sent off in the Watford match. "It was between them both," said Mr. Bentley. "But I have not made an offer for Riddick."

Desperate

Reading have lost their chance of promotion from the Third Division this season but are anxious to build up their strength for the future. Their supporters are desperate for new blood — at one recent match the attendance slumped below 4,000, such is the waning interest.

Gillingham fans will be upset if Yeo goes. He is popular because he is a 90-minute trier and has scored 16 goals this season.

In the past 12 months the club have already transferred top goalscorers Brian Gibbs (to Colchester) and Bill Brown (to Portsmouth).

Yeo, 24, is a native of Worthing, Sussex. He joined the Gills nearly six years ago, signed by Freddie Cox, who had also taken him to Portsmouth.

He has made 131 first team appearances for the Gills and scored 47 goals.

In his first two seasons with the reserves Yeo netted 50 times, including six in one game.

BRIAN YEO

Yeo: No approach says Basil

WILL Brian Yeo, Gillingham's top scorer this season with 16 goals, be leaving Priestfield Stadium for Elm Park, Reading?

An exclusive report in yesterday's POST that Reading manager Roy Bentley, the former Chelsea and England star, is about to make an offer for Yeo — believed to be in the region of £15,000 — has upset Gills' manager, Basil Hayward.

"You seem to know more about it than I do," he said today when asked if there had been any further developments.

"I've not had any approach at all up to the moment, and I think it's all wrong that there should be talk in the Press of a £15,000 offer before any move has been made.

"Until a definite offer is made, I don't think this sort of thing does Gillingham Football Club any good at all in view of the position we are in at the moment."

Told that when approached by the Post Mr. Bentley had confirmed that a bid for Yeo was pending, manager Hayward expressed his surprise.

For their trip to fellow strugglers Shrewsbury tomorrow—another very vital "four points to the winners" clash—Gillingham will take a party of 13, Ray Bailey and David Quirke being added to the side that drew 2-2 with Hartlepool last Saturday.

Quirke, the former Bedford amateur, probably [illegible] into the reckoning as [illegible] of his outstanding [illegible] in Wednesday [illegible] Combination game against Chelsea, when he scored a tremendous goal from 30 yards.

Dubious tactics

When Shrewsbury visited Priestfield Stadium last November sports writers racked their brains for fresh adjectives to describe the visitors' dubious tactics which quickly earned them the wrath of the crowd—but failed to save them from a 4-1 hiding.

Shirt pulling, ankle tapping, pushing, shoving and punching — a liberal combination of these when the offside trap failed had Bournemouth referee D. G. Nippard working overtime.

DAVID QUIRKE

Surprisingly only one Shrewsbury player—centre-forward Ted Loyden—was booked.

At least one new opponent will be facing the Gills in tomorrow's return. He's Gerry Bridgwood, 24-year-old former Stoke utility forward, who signed for the Shropshire club a couple of days ago at a fee of about £12,000.

Brid[illegible] been with Stoke [illegible] years, and during [illegible] time made about [illegible] appearances for them.

Shrewsbury are next to bottom of the Third Division, two points and one place below the Gills but with a game in hand.

Most striking feature of their home record is that in 13 matches they have conceded only nine goals. Against that they have scored only 13, which in view of Gillingham's limited goal power suggests a dour battle of defences.

Any Gillingham supporters making the trip by road are recommended by the A.A. to take the following route:

Dartford Tunnel, A13 towards London through Barking, A.12 (signposted) through Woodford and Edmonton to the start of the M.1; to Rugby, A.5 to Shrewsbury.

For those travelling by rail, cheap day return from Chatham (changing at Victoria for Euston and Wolverhampton) is £3 2s.

The Victoria trains leaves Gillingham at 9.17 a.m. and Chatham at 9.20. Shrewsbury is reached at 2.13 p.m.—an hour before the kick-off which is at 3.15.

Gillingham Reserves, away to Luton in the Football Combination, will take the following 12: Bellotti, Ribbins, Simmons, Gough, Arnott, Peach, Osborn, Harrison, Gilbert, Folds, Tydeman, Bray.

ROLL CALL

Aug.	10	Tranmere	A	0—2		
	14	ORIENT*	H	2—2	5,988	Quirke (2)
	17	ORIENT	H	2—2	5,524	Woodley, T. Simpson
	20	Orient*	A	0—3		
	24	Barnsley	A	1—0		Gibbs
	27	Rotherham	A	0—1		
	31	LUTON	H	1—3	8,227	Williams
Sept.	7	Torquay	A	0—2		
	14	BRIGHTON	H	5—0	4,445	Gilbert (3), Yeo (2), Woodley
	16	Barrow	A	1—2		Yeo
	20	Southport	A	2—4		Yeo, Woodley
	28	MANSFIELD	H	1—1	4,630	Woodley
Oct.	4	Reading	A	2—3		Yeo (2).
	9	ROTHERHAM	H	2—0	5,525	Gilbert, Yeo
	12	STOCKPORT	H	0—0	5,314	
	19	Bristol Rovers	A	1—5		Riddick
	26	PLYMOUTH	H	1—0	5,170	Riddick
Nov.	2	Watford	A	1—2		T. Simpson
	5	Northampton	A	1—0		Yeo
	9	WALSALL	H	4—0	4,857	Smillie, Yeo (2), Riddick
	16	Orient‡	A	1—1		Smillie
	20	ORIENT‡	H	2—1	9,563	Riddick (2)
	23	SHREWSBURY	H	4—1	5,270	Simpson, Riddick, Yeo, Machin (pen.)
	30	Bournemouth	A	0—2		
Dec.	7	Luton‡	A	1—3		Yeo
	13	Stockport	A	0—5		
	21	BRISTOL RVS.	H	0—2		
	26	READING	H	2—2	4,692	Yeo (2)
	28	Plymouth	A	1—1		Riddick
Jan.	11	WATFORD	H	0—5	6,641	
	25	NORTHAMPT'N	H	2—0	4,532	Yeo, Woodley
	28	Walsall	A	1—2		Yeo (pen.)
Feb.	1	HARTLEPOOL	H	2—2	4,785	T. Simpson, Woodley.
		Shrewsbury	A			
	15	BOURNEMOUTH	H			

*League Cup

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

Division 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Watford	26	15	7	4	39	13	37
Swindon	27	15	7	5	45	23	37
Bournemouth	28	16	4	8	46	28	36
Stockport	28	12	10	6	48	35	34
Plymouth	29	13	7	9	34	29	33
Luton	27	14	4	9	40	26	32
Tranmere	28	14	3	11	43	43	31
Torquay	29	12	6	11	36	29	30
Reading	28	11	7	10	44	37	29
Northampton	28	10	8	10	33	32	28
Barnsley	28	9	9	10	35	40	27
Barrow	27	11	5	11	39	46	27
Walsall	28	8	10	10	30	28	26
Southport	27	11	4	12	45	43	26
Rotherham	28	9	8	11	31	30	26
Bristol R.	26	10	6	10	40	42	26
Brighton	30	9	8	13	41	45	26
Mansfield	26	8	8	10	32	31	24
Orient	26	7	10	9	30	37	24
Crewe	28	9	6	13	36	48	24
Hartlepool	29	6	12	11	26	49	24
GILLINGHAM	28	8	6	14	37	49	22
Shrewsbury	27	7	6	14	23	[illegible]	20
Oldham Ath.	28	5	5	18	23	[illegible]	[illegible]

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	15	13	1	1	48	16	27
Tottenham	16	12	1	3	42	17	25
Arsenal	14	10	4	0	39	9	24
Q.P.R.	15	10	2	3	24	17	22
Crystal P.	15	8	4	3	33	22	20
West Ham	16	6	8	2	26	17	20
Ipswich Tn.	15	8	3	4	44	27	19
Norwich C.	14	5	6	3	34	20	16
Bristol C.	12	7	1	4	24	16	15
Southampton	17	7	1	9	31	28	15
Birmingham	16	6	3	7	19	20	15
Cardiff C.	15	6	3	6	19	21	15
GILLINGHAM	15	5	5	5	16	19	15
Plymouth	14	6	3	5	20	26	15
Chelsea	15	6	2	7	28	29	14
Bristol R.	17	6	2	9	29	40	14
Oxford Utd.	15	6	1	8	17	14	13
Walsall	13	5	3	5	23	22	13
Leicester C.	14	5	2	7	21	27	12
Swansea T.	15	2	7	6	21	34	11
Peterborough	14	1	6	7	10	25	8
Northampton	15	3	2	10	17	36	8
Reading	16	3	2	11	19	47	8
Luton Tn.	15	1	6	8	11	29	8
Bournemouth	14	1	5	8	14	27	7
Swindon Tn.	14	3	1	10	13	30	7

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

Millwall	20	18	2	0	86	23	38
Ipswich	19	15	4	0	62	16	34
Orient	18	13	5	0	58	21	31
Q.P.R.	19	12	4	3	50	25	28
Charlton	19	10	5	4	45	24	25
Crystal P.	21	12	1	8	52	42	25
Tottenham	20	9	2	9	52	28	20
Colchester	21	7	3	11	31	60	17
Chelsea	18	7	2	9	40	37	16
West Ham	21	5	6	10	26	48	16
Luton	20	4	7	9	36	46	15
Fulham	17	6	2	9	23	31	14
Reading	21	5	4	12	32	73	14
Watford	17	5	3	9	26	48	[illegible]
Brighton	20	4	3	13	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GILLINGHAM	17	3	1	13	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Oxford U	18	0	2	16	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Gregg makes £12,000 signing

Injuries give Gills' boss a headache

GILLINGHAM'S battle to lift themselves from the relegation zone took a hard knock on Saturday when a point was conceded to fellow-strugglers, Hartlepool United.

Before this match, the northern club held a one point advantage over third from bottom Gillingham but the margin was increased to two on Tuesday night when Hartlepool took a point in a 1—1 draw at Swindon.

This was a further blow for the Gills who now have a real fight on their hands. Tomorrow's (Saturday) trip to Shrewsbury again produces a

It was announced yesterday that Reading manager Roy Bentley was about to make an offer for Gills' top scorer, Brian Yeo.

bottom-of-the-table clash as the Shropshire club occupy next to bottom spot — just two points behind Gillingham.

News from the Stadium yesterday (Thursday) was that four Gillingham players were having treatment for injuries. Wing-half Terry Simpson, a *marksman against Hartlepools,* reported to the ground the morning after the match with a strain and is still receiving attention.

Simpson was joined on the *casualty list in midweek* when Brian Yeo (strain), Andy Smillie (knee) and Derek Woodley (foot) took knocks in training.

Manager Basil Hayward said *yesterday: "I shall wait until* late tomorrow before I decide on the line-up to go to Shrewsbury."

But everything points to an unchanged line-up should the injured players recover in time for tomorrow.

It was against Shrewsbury in November that Gillingham pulled off one of the best wins with a 4—1 scoreline and tomorrow Gills will be hoping to repeat last year's 2—1 success at Gay Meadow.

Shrewsbury, managed by former Manchester United and Northern Ireland goalkeeper, Harry Gregg, were only just pipped for Division Two status last term by Oxford United and Bury.

But this season the Shropshire team have failed to recapture the form that saw them make a sustained challenge and end last season on a winning note with a 1—0 success at Priestfield Stadium.

STOKE SIGNING

Gregg pulled off a major signing on Wednesday when he secured the signature of Gerry Bridgewood, a utility forward, for £12,000 from Stoke City. Bridgewood, aged 24, spent nine seasons with the Potteries' club and made 160 first team appearances.

But while Bridgewood will make his debut against Gillingham, full-back Geoff Fellows is a doubtful starter after going down with 'flu. However, manager Gregg hopes he will recover in time and he is named in the line-up.

Shrewsbury will field: John Phillips, goal, a 17-year-old who has made the position his own after the transfer of Alan Boswell to Wolves early in the *season.*

Full-backs: Tony Gregory, joined the club from school; Geoff Fellows, previously with Aston Villa.

Half-backs: Dave Pountney, *ex-Aston Villa; Alf Woods,* ex-Manchester City and used as a striker by Mr. Gregg in recent matches: Peter Dolby.

Forwards: Trevor Meredith, tricky winger who was signed *from Burnley; George Board*man, formerly with Queens Park; Dennis Hawkins, Welsh Under-23 international and signed from Leeds United two months ago; Gerry Bridgewood; *Pat Douglas, a 17-year-*old drafted into the senior side and has been a regular for three months.

AT LUTON

Gillingham Reserves, who lost 3—2 at home to Chelsea Reserves on Wednesday night, will visit Luton for a Football Combination fixture. Next *Wednesday, the Reserves will* meet Bristol City at the Stadium, kick-off 7.30 p.m.

Tomorrow, the Youth team have a South East Counties League game against Colchester *United at the Garrison* Ground.

Wing-half Ray Bailey has been placed on the transfer list at his own request.

Not too late to plan

MAY I reply to my critic W. J. Waterman. Surely when he wrote he had his tongue in his cheek.

In my reply, I do not wish to be personal, but my critic has surprized me.

I claim to be one of the hardcore who turn up every Saturday (wet or fine), therefore I am investing in the Club by paying at the turnstile. I also buy tickets and place a club poster in my window.

So that should answer the question, "How much am I prepared to invest?"

In my letter of 17 January, I was very careful with its wording, in which I stated "The majority of Directors."

I, and a great number of supporters, still remember when two local business men of repute, who I am sure would have been big assets to the Club, were turned down. WHY? And yet my critic concludes with the words "A little help from everyone."

I *trust* that the words of wisdom from myself and other supporters will be well digested by the Directors of the Club, for it is not too late for them to take the football — *going public into* their confidence and to plan for a team worthy of better support.

FIRST CLASS TEAM

With the development that is to take place in South-East Kent, the Medway Towns and District will be worthy of a first class team to support.

Therefore, my *statement* about Aston Villa cannot be ruled out.

Finally, when my critic mentions "Don't rock the boat and give a few hours each week," *words fail me.*

JIM BUCK

Walderslade Road,
Chatham.

Blue & Whites withdraw

IT was announced yesterday (Thursday) that due to lack of *support* Blue & Whites have withdrawn from the Medway Area Sunday League's division one. Their fixtures will be taken over by Gillingham F.C. Supporters' Club.

Basil plays it safe

ALTHOUGH he thinks Priestfield Stadium is fit for football and there was a practice match there for his players today, Gillingham manager Basil Hayward has decided not to play the Third Division home game against Bournemouth this week in any event.

"We had Saturday's match against Bournemouth postponed when I thought the pitch was playable and that caused a lot of inconvenience to spectators," he said today. "Rather than cause any more, I have decided not to arrange anything for this week."

The reserves' match against Bristol City, tentatively arranged for this evening was also off. But he had no doubt the ground would be fit for Saturday's Combination game against Southampton. The first team are away to Crewe.

So far, the Gills have managed to avoid the flu bug. But they have one worry — match fitness, hence today's game.

Gills' second stringers can earn step up

GILLINGHAM Reserves have a good chance of taking both Football Combination points when they play Chelsea Reserves, below them in the table, at Priestfield Stadium this evening (7.30 kick-off).

There are several changes from the side which drew 0-0 at Peterborough on Saturday and David Peach may play a more attacking role with top scorer Carl Gilbert.

Gillingham Reserves are short of goals and have netted only 14 times in 14 league games to take 14 points. Chelsea, 4-0 losers at home to Arsenal on Saturday, have 12 points from 14 games and have scored 25 goals.

Look-out

The Priestfield second string have been beaten only once in their last seven outings and with manager Basil Haywood obviously on the lookout for replacements to boost his fading first team, the likely candidates can be expected to provide 100 per cent effort tonight.

Ray Bailey, transfer-listed this week, is certain to be the subject of attention from other clubs.

Team: Bellotti, Ribbins, Simmons, Bailey, Arnott, Quirke, Osborn, Harrison, Gilbert, Folds, Peach.

● Gillingham Supporters have an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone tonight, by attending the first of the Blue and White Supporters' Association's Wednesday social evenings social evenings at the at the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham.

Not only will they be able to enjoy the music of the Barons beat group, well-known in the Towns, but also help the Blue and Whites improve spectator facilities at Priestfield Stadium with their contribution at the door.

"Kick-off" is at 8 p.m., and admission 3s. 6d.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

MOVE TO RAISE CASH FOR GILLS

MR. E. TAYLOR of Ingram Road, Gillingham, queries in last week's Chatham News attendance figures at the Stadium at the time I joined the club and adds a cynical comment on my remark about the need for change at that time.

I gather Mr. Taylor has not been attending Gillingham matches for quite a spell since he was taken off the job that gave him free admission to the ground.

My comments on the club are my own views and *are in no way* connected with those of the Board of Directors. In statements that I make I do not wish to reflect on the efforts of those who have been before me.

I wish to make it quite clear that I am one of the first to *recognise the good that Freddie Cox* — Mr. Taylor pointed out that by letting Mr. Cox go the Directors lowered their sights from Division 2 — did for Gillingham but having reached Division 3 there had to be a change either by Mr. Cox or whoever followed.

These changes were inevitable if efforts were to be made to give the club Division 2 status.

As to Mr. Cox's departure to Bournemouth I would have thought it obvious to anyone that he would jump at the chance to have a closer contact with his business interest.

It is a recognisable fact — it happened at Gillingham — that following a promotion-winning season the gates are high. If a club fails to get promotion the next year the gates will gradually tail off until the means are found to gain further success.

My statements on needing no-one to tell me how to run the club still stands, bearing in mind I know the complete position whereas the person that does not know all the facts is liable to do a little dreaming.

Believe me, when a person becomes a director or manager of one of the lesser lights in the Football League it soon brings him back to reality.

The mention of Bournemouth *brings up another point that* was made by me. When you are in the top positions it is still difficult to make ends meet financially, as Bournemouth are finding out at the present time.

Gates in the region of 15,000, coupled with a successfully run *subsidiary money-raising* scheme, are needed.

BIG IMPROVEMENT

I have often heard it said by people that if a team is winning and doing well then the gates will show a big improvement. But I wonder how Stockport County, in the top four of Division 3, feel about that.

They have been described as going "great guns" but they have an overdraft of £40,000, owe £14,550 to directors and £28,168 to a Brewery. The Brewery loan was in respect of a £36,000 social club which lost *£7,595 over a 15-month period.*

This little lot, coupled with an ageing team which looks certain to miss promotion this term, shows what a great chance we have got at Gillingham with everyone working.

There is now a move afoot by a very keen group of Gillingham supporters to put fresh life into the money-raising side of the club. Many people have stated their willingness to assist the group's efforts to bring more money in.

We are very grateful to anyone who thinks he or she can assist in any way for something that is most vital to a *smaller club.*

I am certain the club would not fail supporters' or its own ambitions for the future.

Club donates £104,000 to the Gills

WE at Gillingham Supporters' Association have read with interest and concern your recent series 'How Can The Gills Score Success?'

SPORT POST-BAG

While we applaud the *POST'S initiative* and interest in publishing this feature there are, nevertheless, several matters which must be clarified.

We are very disturbed that the supporters' association was not consulted for views and opinions — we are the original, and largest supporting body of Gillingham F.C., and, as such, form an integral part of the club. Our president, Mr. George Wright, is a Gillingham F.C. director and also chairman of our pools committee, who have responsibility for our Daily Draw/Instant Jackpot / I.O.U. fund-raising scheme.

We employ a full-time organiser for fund-raising but are unable to donate more than £100 a week to Gillingham F.C., in spite of the fact that all profit goes to the club.

The supporters' association have donated £104,864 15s. 10d. to the Gills in the last eight years. This figure includes payment for a new tannoy system, new turnstiles, towards floodlights, etc. We are also instrumental in the organisation of many varied functions and activities, expressly promoted for the ultimate benefit of the Gills and which have been notified to the Evening Post.

Pled[illegible]

As for the future, we are obviously pledged to helping the football club as far as is humanly possible and at the same time cater for the needs and requirements of the football fan at Priestfield. Our policy is as stated in Rule 2 of our constitution: "... to promote the general welfare of Gillingham F.C.; to create and develop interest in the club; to promote measures calculated to benefit the club and to add strenuous opposition to anything that might lead to its detriment." Our motto is: "To Help, Not Hinder", and almost 900 members have joined our association to help us further our aims.

We hope to have the blessing of the board of directors for an alternative *site for our club house*, as our original application for a site at the Gillingham end was turned down by Gillingham Council. We are ready to have premises available by next season.

The advantages of a social club are that it will provide a meeting place for supporters to have a drink, meet friends and other supporters and would be, of course, a source of revenue.

We feel we have a vital role to play in the future of Gillingham F.C. and are prepared to meet anybody at any time if it will be to the ultimate benefit of the Gills.—*MARK AGATE*, Publicity Officer, Gillingham F.C. Supporters' Association.

Skipper misses 3 vital games

RIDDICK SUSPENDED FOR 14 DAYS

GILLINGHAM'S efforts to escape from the lower regions of the Third Division took a hard knock yesterday (Thursday) with the announcement that skipper Gordon Riddick had been suspended for 14 days — a decision that will cause him to miss three vital League matches.

Manager Basil Hayward described the suspension as "disgraceful" and said he felt the club was punished and humiliated enough by the 5-0 home defeat at the hands of Watford on 11 January.

It was during this match, when the score stood at 0-0, that Riddick received marching orders for aiming a kick at a Watford player.

Mr. Hayward added: "It is a big blow for us as Gordon will miss the visits to Crewe Alexandra and Swindon, the latter match is on Tuesday, February 25, and the home game with Tranmere Rovers the following week.

"Had he made contact with the Watford player then it would have been different — the act was there but it never materialized," said the Gills' boss.

Mr. Hayward added that he felt Riddick had been severely provoked during the match and

Ralph Miller, who returns to Priestfield Stadium tomorrow with Bournemouth. J.4043

it was a petty case that did not justify a 14-day suspension for the player, who had a very good record.

Riddick is the second Gillingham player to be suspended this term. Bill Williams, who had a personal hearing, received a 7-day suspension after receiving marching orders at Reading in October. But a fixture cancellation meant that he did not miss a game.

News from Priestfield Stadium yesterday was that, providing the weather does not deteriorate, tomorrow's attractive home fixture with promotion-challenging Bournemouth will definitely be on.

The snow cleared itself from the Stadium ground on Wednesday but despite a frost on Wednesday evening the ground is in good condition.

The postponement of Saturday's match at Shrewsbury gave any injury problem added time to clear itself and Gillingham will select their line-up to meet the "Cherries" from: John Simpson, Tony Weston, Mike Green, Terry Simpson, Bill Williams, Mel Machin, David Quirke, Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Gordon Riddick, Andy Smillie, Bobby Folds and John Meredith.

Gillingham, who crashed 2-0 at Bournemouth in November and have not defeated the "Cherries" in three seasons, desperately need points in their battle to avoid relegation and tomorrow's encounter should provide an interesting match for fans as Bournemouth will be all out for both points to help their promotion drive.

It will be a return to Priestfield Stadium for Bournemouth manager Fred Cox, who left the Gills to take over the seaside club, and former Gills' players, Ralph Miller, who departed in the last close season, Jimmy White and David Stocks.

Gillingham supporters' interest will be centred on Bournemouth winger, Ken Pound, whose name has been linked with the Stadium club in recent weeks. Pound was signed as a professional from Portsmouth by Mr. Hayward when he was in charge of Southern League club, Yeovil.

Pound was later transferred to Swansea Town and joined Bournemouth three seasons ago.

Bournemouth will select their line-up from: Roger Jones, Terry Gulliver, Ralph Miller, Jimmy White, David Stocks, Ray Bumstead, Dennis Longhorn, Ron Bolton, Ken Pound, Keith East, Peters, Derek Burns, Tommy Naylor, Kevin White and Tony Powell.

Naylor was out of the side that crashed 2-0 at home to Luton last Saturday and Pound received a knock in that game. Gulliver has had tonsilitis but is expected to be in the line-up tomorrow.

Gillingham Reserves have no match tomorrow but will meet Bristol City Reserves at the Stadium on Tuesday, kick-off 7-30 p.m. This match should have been played on Wednesday but ground conditions caused the fixture to be postponed.

Crystal Palace tomorrow, kick-off 11 a.m., in a South East Counties fixture at the Garrison Ground.

GORDON RIDDICK P.3330

Priestfield pitch flooded

TONIGHT'S Football Combination match at Priestfield Stadium is OFF. Gillingham manager Basil Hayward notified opponents Bristol City Reserves when he found the pitch flooded after yesterday's thaw. The match may now be played next Tuesday.

Training has been made difficult for the Gills because of the snow which covered their ground and now the rain — but they have been fortunate that there are no players suffering from injury. They have another vital home game on Saturday against championship-chasing Bournemouth.

A spokesman at Reading, who sacked manager Roy Bentley on Monday, said today that the position regarding the club's interest in Brian Yeo was not at all clear and nothing could be said about it until after a board meeting in the next few days.

PLAYER PROFILE

'I'm happy here' says Brian Yeo

IF there's one position that excites the imagination of a crowd — it must be the striker. And when the striker is successful, as 24-year-old Brian Yeo has been for Gillingham this season with 16 goals, then he is sure to have the crowd behind him (writes **John Winter**).

Yeo in turn feels happy with the club who have employed him for the past five years, and was not particularly interested to hear last week that Third Division Reading were interested in him.

"I would like to get out of the Third Division, of course, with or without Gillingham," he said this week. "But I am not anxious to leave the club."

A native of Worthing, Yeo has been interested in all ball games since he was a youngster. He had no particular ambition to do anything — "I never really thought about it."

But appearances in the Worthing and Sussex schoolboy sides earned him trials with Arsenal and Portsmouth and led him into professional football.

He was 15 when he joined Portsmouth and after two years as an apprentice signed pro forms. During the next two years, before moving to Gillingham, he had two games for Portsmouth first team — as an 18-year-old forward in F.A. cup ties with Coventry.

Brian has played in all the forward positions for the Gills' League side, and scored 47 goals in his 140 or so appearances. His highest score was six for the Reserves in a 9-0 Metropolitan League match.

"With the present day double-striker system, I tend to get marked much more tightly than when I was an inside-forward, moving up and down losing the marking player."

But this was something that had to be tolerated. "You have got to keep calm and accept the knocks when you are playing up front," said Yeo, who has never had his name taken or been sent off.

Married with two children — four-year-old Nicola and three-month-old Steven — Brian lives in Crouch Hill Court, Lower Halstow. In his spare time he plays snooker and table tennis.

Bailey has 100th. game

Crewe will decide today

GILLINGHAM will know this morning (Friday) if their match at Crewe will be played. News from the Cheshire club yesterday was that a local referee will be called in this morning to make a ground inspection.

Little snow has fallen at Crewe since the week-end but severe frost for several days has made the ground bone hard.

The ground situation has been further hampered by the fact that an evening game was played last week. Hard frost that followed caused the pitch to be badly rutted and yesterday's verdict from a club spokesman was: "At the moment it is not playable."

He added: "A local referee will be called in on Friday morning to make a final inspection."

MILESTONE

Gillingham, like Crewe Alexandra, have not played a match for three weeks but should tomorrow's fixture be played then it will provide a milestone in the Stadium career of one Gillingham player.

Ray Bailey, who was recently placed on the transfer list at his own request, because he could not command a regular first team position, will take over at centre-forward in place of Gordon Riddick, who started a 14-day suspension on Monday.

For Bailey, who joined the Stadium club from Bedford Town in 1966, it will be his 100th match for the Gills. After being an ever-present last season, he has failed to command a regular place this term after having a cartilage operation during the close season.

The Gillingham line-up at Crewe will be: John Simpson, Tony Weston, Mike Green,

RAY BAILEY

Terry Simpson, Bill Williams, Mel Machin; Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Ray Bailey, Andy Smillie, John Meredith. Sub: David Quirke.

It was thought that Carl Gilbert, who has been a regular marksman in Football Combination fixtures and has made the occasional first team appearance, would be a strong challenger for Riddick's position.

But yesterday manager Basil Hayward said: "I am taking the best 12 players with me to Crewe to try and get something away from home."

On Tuesday evening, Gillingham visit the Football League Cup finalists and current Division Three leaders — Swindon Town.

PRACTICE GAMES

Despite being without a match for three weeks the Gills have been able to hold daily practice games at the Stadium in a bid to retain peak fitness.

Both matches are vital in the Gills' bid to escape from the lower region of the table which is being made more difficult by the congestion of fixtures they face in March and April.

Mr. Hayward has said that the club's aim must now be maximum points from home matches and a point from away games if the club is to climb into the safety zone.

The visit to Crewe, should it be on, is a vital one as the Cheshire Club are only two points and two places clear of Gillingham.

Crewe, who lost their last match 3-0 at Oldham Athletic, have two Bournemouth players on loan to the club. Both Roy Gater and John Hold made their Crewe debuts in the Oldham match and will probably face the Gills tomorrow.

Another new Crewe signing during recent months is Ivan Hollett, from Chesterfield, but a pulled thigh muscle in training this week might rule him out of the side.

Crewe are likely to pick from: Willie Mailey, goal, ex-Everton; Full-backs: Peter Leigh, ex-Manchester City, and Tommy Lowry, ex-Liverpool; Half-backs from: Keith Stott, amateur, Eric Barnes, Roy Gater and Mick Gannon, ex-Scunthorpe.

Forwards? From Don Ratcliffe, ex-Darlington, Kevin McHale, ex-Huddersfield, John Hold, Tommy Curley, ex-Brentford, Hollett, Alan Tarbuck, ex-Everton, and Alan Bradshaw, ex-Blackburn.

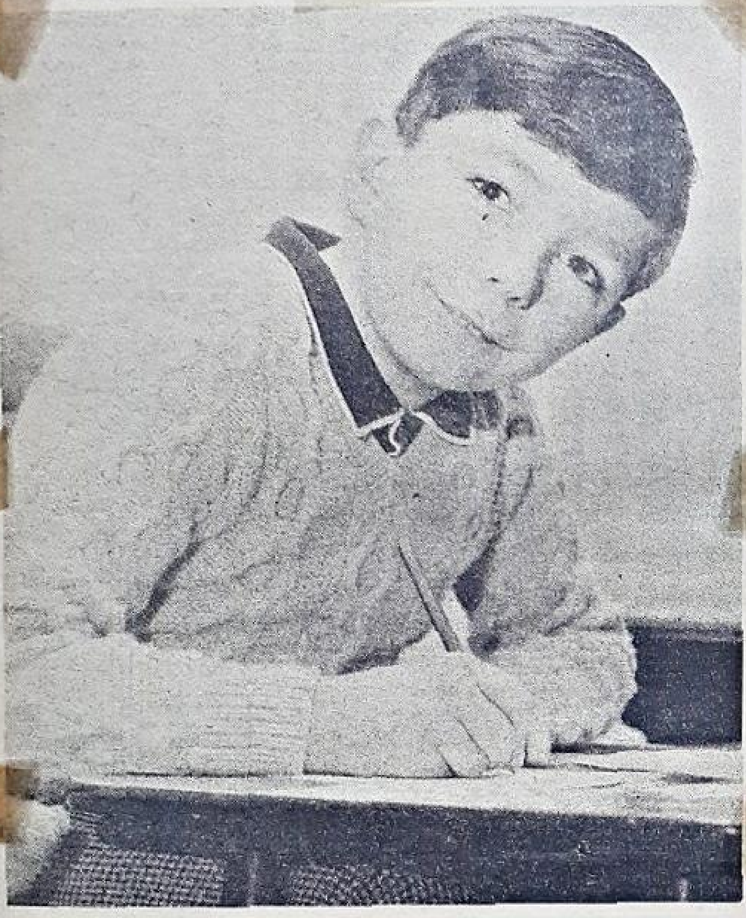
RESERVES

Southampton Reserves are due to visit Priestfield Stadium for a Football Combination fixture tomorrow but a decision on whether the game will take place will be made this afternoon.

Yesterday Mr. Hayward said: "The fast thaw after Wednesday night's heavy snow fall has caused some flooding and we are trying to get the water away quickly."

The Youths' fixture with Reading at the Garrison Ground has been called off.

A former Gillingham player in the news this week was Ron Saunders, who has been appointed team manager at Oxford United.



SOCCER-MAD MARTYN'S CZECH LINK

A CZECHOSLOVAKIAN soccer fan has written to nine-year-old Martyn France, a Gillingham Football Club mascot, after reading the sports pages of the Evening Post.

Martyn, of Elham Close, Gillingham, is a pupil at Twydall Junior School, and like his father, Harold France, chairman of the Blue and White Association, is a mad-keen supporter of Gillingham.

The letter from Vaclav Lajn, whose address is Horka 192, Cernosice-J, Praha-Zapd, Czechoslova kia, said he had read the sports pages with interest, particularly the story of Martyn being a football club mascot.

He asked Martyn to send him a club badge. Martyn readily agreed and asked for one in return.

"Martyn is mad keen on soccer," said his father, "and his ambition is to play for Gillingham."

● Our picture shows Martyn writing to his newly-found pen-pal.

Gills third time unlucky

FOR the third successive weekend, Gillingham have a blank Saturday. Their match at Crewe was called off this morning after a local referee had been called in following an overnight snowfall.

A Crewe official said that the referee had inspected the Cresty Road pitch last night and had declared then that it was unplayable. The ground had been cut up very badly in a mid-week Northern Floodlight Cup match and there had been freezing temperatures since.

"Three or four inches of snow fell overnight and the referee had no hesitation in declaring the ground unfit," said the spokesman.

Good idea

But the postponement does not give Gillingham's first team players a free day. Manager Basil Hayward, anxious at the lack of games in recent weeks, has decided to field his full first team against Southampton Reserves in a Football Combination match at Priestfield Stadium.

Team: Simpson, Green, Weston, Simpson, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Yeo, Bailey, Smillie, Meredith. Substitute: Quirke.

"In view of the lack of match practice and with a trip to league leaders Swindon on Tuesday, I thought it a good idea to give them a run out against the strong Southampton side," said Mr. Hayward.

Stiff test

"The pitch looks in very good condition and unless the weather deteriorates during the next 24 hours I see no reason why the game should not go ahead as planned.

"I only hope we get a large crowd to shout the lads on," he added.

"I've already heard that former Tottenham player Frank Saul is to be included in the side so they should give the lads a stiff test," said Mr. Hayward.

If Southampton's game at Nottingham is called off, their reserves, like Gillingham, may take on a first team look.

Gillingham Youths' fixture against Reading at the Garrison ground has also been called off.

Supporters' meeting

GILLINGHAM F.C. Supporters' Association will hold their annual meeting at the Livingstone Arms, Gillingham, on Tuesday 11 March, starting at 7.30 p.m.

Executive committee members who retire and have offered themselves for re-election are: Alex Bristow, David Lindsay, Deryck Svenson, Arthur Thomas and Sidney Walter.

Voting forms for the Association's "Player of the Year" award will be available from the office at next Saturday's home match with Tranmere Rovers.

Several members were taken on a guided tour of Highbury Stadium on Sunday morning.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

DON'T forget to get your voting form for the Gillingham Supporters' Association "Player of the Year" competition

The competition is open to all members of the association, so if you are not a member and want to enter — join!

The Supporters' Association, by the way, have their annual meeting at the Livingstone Arms, Livingstone Circus, Gillingham, on Tuesday March 11 at 7.30 pm.

GILLS AT SWINDON

DIFFICULT ground conditions at Crewe on Saturday saw Gillingham have their third successive League match postponed.

But manager Basil Hayward took full advantage of the Reserves' home match with Southampton to give the first team an outing.

Yesterday Mr. Hayward said: "We used it as an excuse for tomorrow's visit to Swindon."

The line-up that opposed Southampton will meet the third Division leaders and Football League Cup finalists tonight (Tuesday), and it is:

John Simpson; Tony Weston, Mike Green; Terry Simpson, Bill Williams, Mel Machin; Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Ray Bailey, Andy Smillie, John Meredith, Sub. David Quirke.

Bailey comes in for skipper Gordon Riddick, who is under suspension, and it will be his 100th senior match for the Gills.

On Saturday, Gillingham meet Tranmere Rovers at the Stadium.

An unusual picture taken by Ray Christopher at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday, as referee Mr. E. Ross-Gower gives a leg up to Southampton right-back Bob McCarthy. The referee was not helping the Southampton defence but wanted a rigging support replaced. R 844

Basil Hayward's Own Column

Training is no substitute for a match

AT the time of writing, our visit to Crewe tomorrow (Saturday) is very much in doubt unless there is a very heavy thaw, which means that our next League match could be at Swindon on Tuesday night.

This is going to be a very tough match for us, especially as we have not played for three weeks. Swindon ride high at the head of the table and go to Wembley next month to meet Arsenal in the League Cup Final.

Fortunately we have been able to hold full-scale practice matches at the Stadium each morning this week to try and maintain as near peak match fitness as possible for when we resume our League activities.

A lay-off period is something that a Football Club can well do without. No matter how much a player trains it is no substitute for an actual match and while it might help to remove aches and pains there is always the difficulty of the player catching his breath in the early stages which is often the vital part of the match.

'THUMBS DOWN'

Football administrators do get worried about matches being played these days. As far as I was concerned last Saturday's match against Bournemouth could have been played at the Stadium but the appointed referee, Mr. Payne, of Hounslow, gave a "thumbs down" sign on Saturday morning.

In common with many other managers who are having much-needed games called off it does make one think that the outlook of the present-day administrators vary considerably as to suitability of grounds.

I say this bearing in mind that footwear has improved over the years and there are a number of different types of boots available which are suitable for frost-bound grounds.

Whenever we have the League programme interrupted by the weather it always prompts the usual comment that it is high time there was a break in the season.

This is something I am not in favour of because the time of the break, probably December, January, February, is at a stage when the season is in full swing.

The people who advocate the break should bear in mind that players report back several weeks before the start of a season and work hard to get fit. A break in the season would mean they would have to start all over again.

If a change is wanted, then I would suggest League matches are played during Summer evenings — this would not clash with County Championship Cricket, which is always a controversial subject.

Reference has also been made this week to a re-adjustment to the present points system. It was said that a points-for-goals system might be introduced with a team winning a bonus point for every three goals, with the bonus doubled if the three goals were scored away from home.

My feeling is that the present points system should be left alone and we should concentrate on the main problem of the game which is finance.

Finance is the major problem of most clubs together with the ambitions of players who wish to improve themselves and by that improve the entertainment value for the public.

UNDER PRESSURE

Far too many people do not consider the public, who are the lifeblood of football in their outlook towards the game. Results are the foremost thing in their thoughts and this automatically puts the club manager under pressure.

This I can quite well understand. But once you are under pressure and you are not prepared to get out of it on the ability of your players then you are going to struggle, particularly when you are down.

The only way to achieve any success is to keep working in the correct manner and as near within the laws as you possibly can.

I can remember West Ham in their Division 2 days when they were struggling for a number of years to perfect their present style. They persevered with it, losing at home and away, worked hard and finally achieved the football they are now admired for.

Finally, it was announced this week in a memorandum issued by the referees' committee of the Football Association that a major attempt was to be made to establish a better standard of conduct.

As far as my players are concerned they have always been under orders to accept the referee's decision, show no dissent and play to the letter of the law.

Is Sam longest-serving Gillingham supporter?

WHO is the longest-serving Gillingham supporter? That's the question I asked Gillingham Supporters' Association members in their periodical, "Priestfield Press" and they soon came up with a suggestion — 76-year-old Sam Palmer.

But Mr. Palmer, a supporter since 1908, was not so sure — "there are many who have supported the club longer," he told me yesterday.

If so, who are they? I'd be interested to hear. Mr. Palmer's record will take some beating, because he has missed only a handful of games at Priestfield Stadium, including the reserves, in the 61 years he has been a supporter.

"They are not too good this year," he said. They need new forwards—there's the biggest weakness. But I shall continue to go on watching them as long as I am able."

Mr. Palmer was originally a Plymouth fan, because he was born there. On taking up employment at Chatham Dockyard, he transferred his loyalty to the Gills, then known as New Brompton in the Southern League, and he travelled widely with them as a young man.

No doubt

A former player with Plymouth boys and Ramsgate, he knows what he is talking about when it comes to football which is just as well because he is now accompanied to matches by his son Leslie and four grandsons.

Mr. Palmer has no doubt about his favourite Gillingham player, "John Simpson — with many fans there's no other."

All you need is LUCK

"WE worked for this match all week, and then lost in just one moment." Disappointed words, spoken by Gillingham's disappointed manager Basil Hayward after Tuesday's 1—0 defeat in so-called injury time at Swindon.

It's not easy to take an impartial view, following Gillingham home and away as I do. Yet this match was not right and I know it; Gillingham should never have had to play nearly four minutes over time in the second-half, a period in which there were plenty of fouls but very few hold-ups for injury.

Gillingham played hard because they had to, so handicapped were they by injury, and yet they were always fair and never resorted to time wasting.

It's said that luck never smiles on teams who need it, and this was never illustrated better than in this match.

DANGER ZONE

	Home						Away					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps.
Southport	27	9	3	1	32	13	2	1	11	13	30	26
Rotherham	30	7	3	4	19	12	2	5	9	13	24	26
Orient	28	6	6	2	19	12	2	4	8	13	27	26
Mansfield	27	7	4	2	20	9	1	4	9	13	24	24
Crewe	28	8	2	5	26	20	1	4	8	10	28	24
Hartlepools	31	3	8	5	17	27	3	4	8	11	29	24
Gillingham	29	6	5	3	26	18	2	1	12	11	32	22
Shrewsbury	27	6	4	3	13	9	1	2	11	10	30	20
Oldham	31	4	4	7	17	20	2	3	11	10	38	19

(46 matches to play)

Where the Gills are

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Swindon	29	17	7	5	47	17	41
Watford	31	15	7	9	37	30	37
Plymouth	29	16	4	9	44	26	36
Luton	29	16	4	9	46	28	36
Bournemouth	28	12	10	6	48	35	34
Stockport	31	14	6	11	39	30	34
Torquay	33	11	9	14	50	47	31
Brighton	30	14	3	13	43	45	31
Tranmere	29	11	8	10	45	38	30
Northampton	30	10	10	10	35	34	30
Bristol R.	28	11	6	11	44	45	28
Barrow	29	11	6	12	40	50	28
Barnsley	29	9	9	11	37	44	27
Walsall	31	8	11	12	32	34	27
Southport	27	11	4	12	45	43	26
Rotherham	30	9	8	13	32	36	26
Orient	28	8	10	10	32	39	26
Mansfield	27	8	8	11	33	33	24
Crewe	29	9	6	14	36	50	24
Hartlepool	31	6	12	13	28	56	24
GILLINGHAM	29	8	6	15	37	50	22
Shrewsbury	27	7	6	14	23	39	20
Oldham Ath.	31	6	7	18	27	58	19

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	17	15	1	1	60	17	31
Arsenal	16	12	4	0	47	9	28
Tottenham	16	12	1	3	42	17	25
Q.P.R.	17	10	3	4	26	25	23
Crystal P.	17	9	4	4	38	24	22
West Ham	17	7	8	2	28	18	22
Ipswich T.	16	9	3	4	45	27	21
Walsall	15	7	3	5	30	22	17
Birmingham	18	6	5	7	21	22	17
GILLINGHAM	16	6	5	5	17	19	17
Norwich C.	15	5	6	4	35	25	16
Plymouth	17	6	4	7	21	33	16
Bristol R.	18	7	2	9	31	41	16
Southampton	18	7	1	10	31	29	15
Bristol C.	13	7	1	5	24	21	15
Chelsea	17	6	3	8	29	32	15
Cardiff C.	16	6	3	7	19	26	15
Oxford U.	14	5	3	6	23	25	13
Swansea	16	3	7	6	22	25	13
Leicester	15	5	3	7	22	28	13
Peterborough	16	2	7	7	15	27	11
Northampton	16	3	2	11	18	38	8
Swindon T.	15	3	1	10	13	30	8
Reading	17	3	2	12	20	49	8
Luton Tn.	15	1	6	8	11	39	8
Bournemouth	15	1	5	9	15	31	7

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

	22	19	3	0	95	28	41
Millwall	20	16	4	0	66	17	36
Ipswich T.	19	14	5	0	60	22	23
Orient	20	12	4	4	51	27	28
Q.P.R.	20	11	5	4	48	26	27
Charlton	21	12	1	8	52	42	25
Crystal P.	22	10	2	10	68	31	22
Tottenham	22	5	7	10	29	51	17
West Ham	22	5	7	10	40	53	17
Luton	22	5	7	10	40	53	17
Colchester	22	7	3	12	31	73	17
Chelsea	18	7	2	9	40	37	16
Fulham	18	6	3	9	23	31	15
Watford	19	6	3	10	30	53	15
Reading	22	5	5	12	32	73	15
Brighton	21	4	3	14	30	54	11
GILLINGHAM	17	3	1	13	15	27	7
Oxford U.	19	0	2	17	9	67	2

With goalkeeper Martin well out of position, Southampton left-back Ken Jones makes a desperate effort to stop Brian Yeo from scoring the only goal of the match on Saturday. R 841

EXTRA TIME UNFAIR SAYS ANGRY GILLS BOSS

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward stormed angrily away from the club's game at Swindon last night. They lost by the only goal to the Third Division leaders — and it was scored well into extra time added on by the referee.

The referee claimed he added on two minutes for time wasting. Basil claimed it was as much as seven minutes. Post reporter John Winter made it three minutes, 45 seconds and other estimates varied from no extra time at all to five minutes.

In any event, the Gills were extremely unlucky. They put up a terrific fight with an injury-hit side.

Turn to the back page for the full story and Basil Hayward's views.

Anxious moment at Priestfield Stadium yesterday (Thursday). Gills' wing-half Mel Machin is seen receiving treatment from physiotherapist Stanley Smith, of Tunbridge Wells — the method a Sonic Massage Machine that sends sound waves through Mel's injured knee at a rate of one-and-a-half million vibrations per second.

LAST SHOT BEATS THE GILLS

'We was robbed!'

DEREK WOODLEY — Gillingham's ever-present forward who worried the Swindon defence.

SWINDON 1, GILLINGHAM 0

GILLINGHAM players and fans will remember referee Gerrard Lewis for a long time. He did what Swindon couldn't do in 90 minutes' tense football at the County Ground last night — took both points from the Gills.

The match was three-and-a-half minutes over time when Swindon, the League leaders, scored the winning goal and sent their fans rushing like intoxicated ants across the pitch.

Yet there could hardly have been a minute actually due for second half stoppages. "I allowed two minutes for wasted time, so we had 45 minutes each way," said the unrepentant Mr. Lewis afterwards.

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward thought differently. "It was bloody ridiculous, seven minutes over," he snorted. "There was no time wasting at all."

Gillingham deserved better after fighting a fantastic rearguard battle, although handicapped by injury to three men.

Key linkman Mel Machin left the match with ligament trouble in the 22nd minute; soon afterwards reduced to half power; goalkeeper John Simpson had trouble with cut legs.

Ray Bailey fell back from the forwards to help cover danger man Don Rogers, and David Quirke slotted in to the midfield

BY JOHN WINTER

[illegible] gap. And how these boys fought!

Swindon seemed never to stop attacking, circling the penalty area like vultures around a doomed prey, hammering in shot after shot — yet always there was a Gillingham head soaring a few inches higher or a boot extending a few inches longer to get the ball away.

Twice in the first half Gillingham managed to get into the game to such an extent that they had Swindon — unbeaten at home in the League — in trouble.

Yeo, still a threat when hobbling, was unlucky with headers cleared off the line after mistakes by goalkeeper Peter Downsborough. Bailey — who played well in defence — also missed with his head.

Fine job

At the other end the goal attempts were too numerous to note and John Simpson made several good saves including one at full stretch to a shot by Peter Noble.

Play was so much in Gillingham's half towards the end of the first period that Woodley — who did a fine job worrying the home defence without much support — was flagged offside when only two feet inside the Swindon half.

It was fantastic to feel the crowd respond to Rogers, their top scorer with 21 goals. The first time he got the ball and accelerated through the middle he did so to a gathering roar like an express train — though it could have been 17,000 throats urging him on!

He roamed everywhere but had only one real shot at goal, so well was he covered. And that was pushed out by the flying Simpson.

Seldom venturing out of their tight defensive pattern, with only Woodley and Yeo upfield, the Gills withstood the second half onslaught. Once the referee made Swindon take a free-kick on the edge of the penalty area three times before he was satisfied — "The defensive wall kept moving" he explained.

The tension got tighter. Twelve times he gave free-kicks around the Gills penalty area in the second half.

As time ran out and Gillingham looked to be taking a deserved point, it was Terry Simpson more than anyone who spurred them on to renewed effort by his own brave example.

Disaster

But then came disaster. Fans were streaming away as Rogers took a last corner, the ball skimming head high across the goal to Martin, and popping back for **Noble** to screw it into the back of the net with an overhead kick. A good goal but a sad one.

The whistle went seconds later.

"The boys played marvellously," said Basil Hayward.

But now they face continuing their immediate relegation battle without Machin as well as the suspended Riddick. On Saturday they play Tranmere and next Wednesday . . . Swindon again.

Swindon: Downsborough, Thomas, Trollope, Butler, Burrows, Harland, Smith, Smart, Jones, Noble, Rogers. Sub Heath.

Gillingham: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Machin (sub Quirke), Woodley, Yeo, Bailey, Smillie, Mere[illegible].

Attendance: 17,489.

DAVID QUIRKE — slotted in well when Mel Machin went off.

No 35

H.T. 0-0

attend: 17,489

BLOW FOR DENNIS HUNT

FORMER Gillingham full-back Dennis Hunt, who joined Brentford in the close season after nearly 10 years at Priestfield Stadium, is likely to give up full-time football because of a leg injury.

Dennis told the Chatham News this week: "It looks as if I will have to pack up playing. I have seen three specialists *after receiving the injury in a* home match against Wrexham in October.

"I played in four matches after that but it went again in the game with Southend in January."

Dennis, aged 30 and who made about 350 first team appearances for Gillingham, is a fully qualified F.A. coach and assists John Arnott and Charlton goalkeeper, Charlie Wright, with coaching classes which are held each week-end in the Medway Towns.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

EXTRA TIME WAS UNWARRANTED

I WAS still fuming at the decision of referee Mr D.R.G. Lewis (Port Talbot) to play four minutes added time in the second half of Tuesday night's game at Swindon when I sat down to write this latest article.

We were well worth our point as the minutes ticked away against the League leaders and League Cup finalists but to lose to the last kick of the match, during a time that I felt was utterly unwarranted, was disgusting.

There was just enough time to place the ball on the centre spot and roll it forward before the whistle signalled the end of the game.

I would personally rather lose a game after being outplayed and out-thought. Then we can blame ourselves but to lose like we did on Tuesday leaves too many excuses which could possibly harm our morale when things are not running too smoothly.

The players and myself ran into considerable criticism after our performance against Southampton Reserves on Saturday.

NEW SYSTEM

I would like to point out that this game was used to bring into match effect a new system the players and I had discussed and used in practice games that week in a bid to change the style for away games and pick up points that will lift us from the lower region of the table.

We upset a number of supporters at the match with the system, used to discipline the side and not over-expose ourselves at the back, but as far as I am concerned it was a success, bearing in mind that match-wise the players had been inactive for three weeks.

The same team travelled to Swindon on Tuesday night but it was heartbreaking for them after they had worked so hard to lose Mel Machin (twisted knee) after 20 minutes and then shortly afterwards have Brian Yeo sustain a pulled muscle.

But the style that we settled for still gave us tremendous striking power which was borne out by the fact that we created at least three chances that Brian Yeo, had he been fully fit, would almost certainly have converted.

Also, there was the occasion when a Swindon full-back headed past his 'keeper and saw the ball stick in the goal-line mud. The goalkeeper recovered before Yeo could due to his handicap.

The first half was extended by three minutes because of the number of injuries to both sides. But why four extra minutes were played in the second half is beyond me.

There were few stoppages and certainly no time wasting because of gamesmanship.

As far as I am concerned what the referee interpreted as time-wasting was a good professional approach to the game by Gillingham players. They were under the handicap of having only 10 fully fit players but they played it tight at the back, playing the long ball into the space down the lines in an effort to catch the Swindon defence unawares with Derek Woodley's pace.

These tactics almost brought results but then when we were well past full-time and injury time Swindon scored a winner.

This gives some idea of the tremendous pressure and strain the players and manager are under to avoid the stigma of disciplinary action.

Lastly, the players gave a tremendous show at Swindon which prompted comments from several people that they could not understand how Gillingham are in their present league table position.

Now we must work hard for our next two matches — both at home — against Tranmere Rovers tomorrow and the return with Swindon on Wednesday evening.

As Robbie Burns would have put it

SPORT POST-BAG

I AND several other loyal fans must say thank you to the Post for providing a platform where Gills fans can air their views. I have followed Gillingham for 14 years and have read with interest all that has been said so far.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add my own ideas on what's wrong.

First, Basil Hayward seems to think that he is above criticism, constructive or other wise. (Like a certain politician we all know and look what a mess this country is in.)

Secondly, he may have been in football for years but that does not mean he knows it all! If he was as expert as he fondly imagines, the Gills would be the top team in the First Division!

Thirdly, the fans on the terraces pay the piper and should be allowed a say in calling the tune.

As Robbie Burns once said: "You dinna have to be good to know what's good. Q.E.D.

J. LEEDS

Locarno Avenue
Gillingham

SUPPORTING ROLE

The latest recruits to Gillingham Football Supporters' Club, (left to right): Ruth Galvin, Linda Jones, Sandra Bristow, and Carol Cash, seen here with some of the players. R.969

ROVERS SLIP IN TITLE CHASE

Machin and Yeo in fight for fitness

PHYSIOTHERAPY specialist Mr. Stanley Smith from Tunbridge Wells, was called to Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday and yesterday (Thursday) to treat Gillingham's two injured players — Mel Machin and Brian Yeo.

Both players received their injuries in the narrow 1-0 defeat at Swindon on Tuesday evening. Machin was forced to take no further part in the game after the 23rd minute because of a twisted knee, and Brian Yeo gamely struggled on after pulling a thigh muscle during the first half.

By far the most doubtful starter is Machin who could hardly walk on Wednesday morning and had to be brought to the Stadium by a team-mate.

But while manager Basil Hayward has adequate cover at the back for Machin his most serious headache is Yeo's injury, and every effort is being made to get the player fit for tomorrow's home match with Tranmere Rovers at the Stadium.

MUCH NEEDED

With Gordon Riddick nearing the end of his 14-day suspension, Yeo is the only recognised goalscorer in the line-up and his absence would certainly lessen Gills' chances of capturing two much-needed points against the Cheshire club.

Mr. Hayward said yesterday: "With both Riddick and Yeo out of the side it would be difficult to get by. We are fighting hard to get both players fit for a vital game."

Gillingham, who crashed 2-0 at Tranmere in the season's opening game, were desperately unlucky not to come away with a point from Swindon. But now they go into two home matches — Swindon will visit the Stadium on Wednesday evening — and victories from these two games will give them confidence for their following two visits to Orient (8 March) and Hartlepool two days later.

Gillingham Reserves have no fixture tomorrow but the Youths will visit Brighton in the South East Counties League.

SLIPPED BADLY

During recent weeks Tranmere have slipped badly in the Third Division promotion race, losing four successive home matches, including the vital games against Swindon and Watford.

Tranmere have also returned pointless from their last two away games. They lost narrowly at Plymouth Argyle on Saturday and at Swindon the previous week. Both defeats were by the only goal, but Tranmere are not the team they were.

They have been badly hit by injuries and sickness. George Hudson, the ex-Coventry centre-forward, is still unwell with boils and blood poisoning. Gerry Casey, left-half, is also in hospital with a foot injury. Right-half Alan King has just completed a month's suspension and may return to the side tomorrow.

Ken Beamish and John McNamee both forwards, have also been troubled by injuries. But the biggest blow of all in the past month has been the departure of George Yardley, the Scottish centre-forward and leading marksman, who has returned to Australia after his kidney injury sustained against Shrewsbury last year from which he never fully recovered.

Three specialists disagreed over whether Yardley was fit enough to continue his playing career. The club specialist advised against it, but another said he could resume. After the directors had claimed £15,000 in compensation from the Football League, a third independent specialist failed to agree.

Rovers have been told that their compensation claim has been rejected, and Yardley flew from Paris to Sydney last Wednesday.

LIMITED SUCCESS

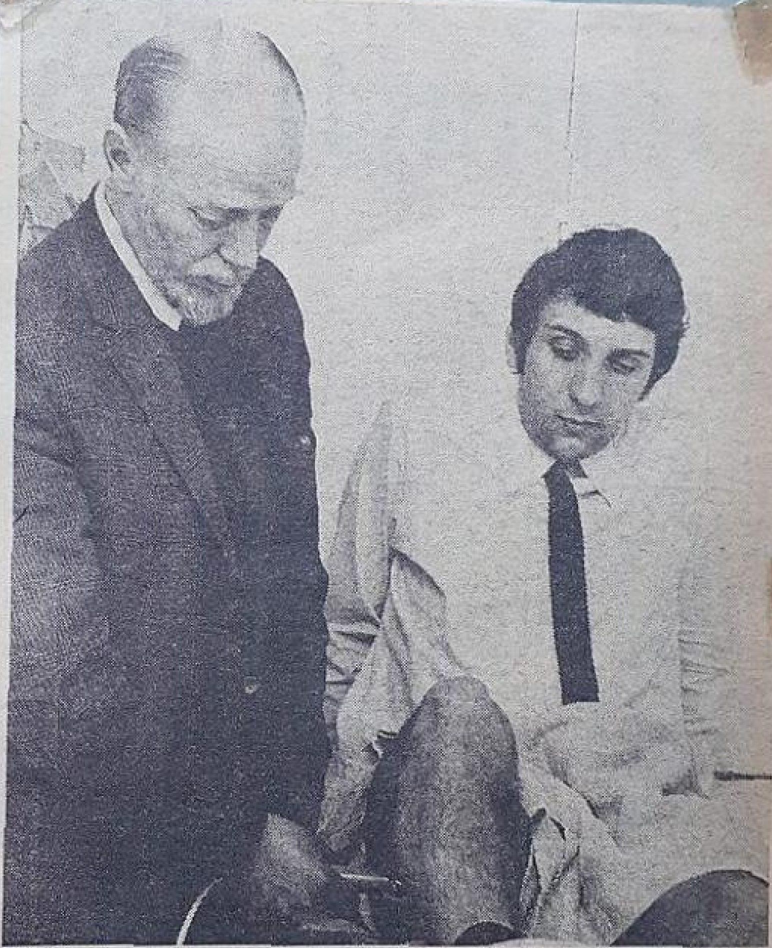
In the past month they have felt the loss badly. Manager Dave Russell has repeatedly switched the attack, but with limited success. In the last two games skipper Derek Smith, the ex-Everton centre-half, has been leading the attack.

But numerous changes have been made for the Priestfield Stadium clash and Derek Smith has lost his experimental place. Ken Beamish takes over the leadership of the attack, and on the left John Rowland will partner McNamee.

On the other flank Joe Pritchard will link up with Roy Mathias, who filled the left-half spot against Plymouth. Trialist Dave Moorcroft, ex-Skelmersdale United half-back, makes his third Football League appearance at right-half. He recently returned from America, where he played for Texas side — Dallas.

Also recalled is Trevor Storton, 19 year old England Youth centre-half in place of Smith. Roy Mathias, a 21 year old Liverpool lad, will deputize for Casey.

Team: Cumbes; Storton (S), Robertson, Moorcroft, Storton (T), King, Mathias, Pritchard, Beamish, Rowland, McNamee. Sub: Gill.



GILLINGHAM'S leading scorer, Brian Yeo, who strained a muscle in the team's great but losing fight at Swindon on Wednesday, still hopes to be fit for the home clash with Tranmere Rovers on Saturday. He has been undergoing ultra-sonics treatment from Tunbridge Wells physiotherapist Stanley Smith. Our picture was taken at the ground yesterday. Brian—and colleague Mel Machin, who has a twisted knee—will receive more treatment today.

Mike Green and a Tranmere defender both missed this Meredith cross.

THE AGONY OF BRIAN YEO . . .

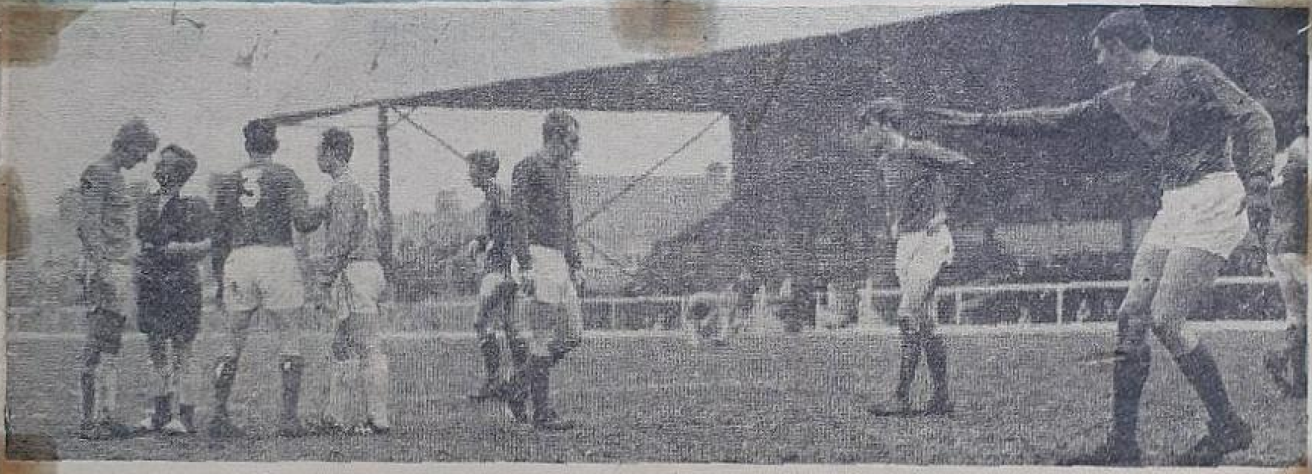
INJU[illegible] Swindon only four days earlier Brian Yeo, the Gills' leading goalscorer, left the Priestfield Stadium ground after only 27 minutes against Tranmere on Saturday and did not return.

Chatham Standard photographer Ray Christopher captured the sequence that led to Yeo's departure.

Left, Yeo jars his right knee after firing at the Rovers goal, with centre-half Trevor Storton in close attendance.

Centre, the Gills [illegible] writhes in agony as [illegible] Jimmy Boswell and [illegible] Mr. K. A. Wynn [illegible]hampton) attend him. Right, Yeo is helped off th[e] pitch to take no further par[t] in the match.

R.03



TRANMERE 'keeper Cumbes points, colleague Robertson holds off Andy Smillie, and referee Wynn takes Carl Gilbert's name during the second half.

Tranmere goalkeeper Jimmy Cumbes cuts out a Derek Woodley cross in the first half from the challenging Ray Bailey.

Riddick returns but Yeo doubtful

BRIAN YEO will receive treatment from Tunbridge Wells physiotherapist Stanley Smith today as part of his fitness fight for tomorrow night's home game with Swindon Town.

Yeo, who is a doubtful starter, left the pitch in the 27th minute against Tranmere on Saturday with a recurrence of the leg muscle injury he sustained in the 1-0 defeat at Swindon last Tuesday.

But heartening news for Gillingham fans is that skipper Gordon Riddick has completed his 14-day suspension, that caused him to miss the matches against Swindon and Tranmere, and he will be available for selection tomorrow.

Commenting on Saturday's 1-1 draw, manager Basil Hayward told the Chatham Standard: "We were playing very well up until Rovers scored but then we seemed to lose our rhythm. It knocked us right out of our stride until we managed to pull one back through Gilbert."

Gilbert, a lone attacker after Yeo's departure, will almost surely come into the reckoning for tomorrow's game — a match that the Gills cannot afford to slip up in if they hope to ease their relegation fears.

Some Swindon players received knocks in Saturday's 1-0 victory but news from the County Ground was that an unchanged line-up is likely to meet Gillingham at Priestfield Stadium.

It is: Downsborough, Thomas, Trollope, Butler, Burrows, Harland, Heath, Smart, Jones, Noble, Rogers. Sub: Penman.

On Saturday, Gillingham meet Orient at Brisbane Road, and the Reserves have a home Football Combination match against Reading.

Saturday's gate of 3,860 was the lowest at the Stadium for several seasons. The previous lowest attendance was 3,926 against Mansfield in April of last year.

At least this Gills team won

● Gillingham Supporters' Association know what football is all about. In their first match against a visiting supporters' club Gillingham trounced Tranmere 10-2 at the Black Lion Fields on Saturday morning.

It is hoped that get-togethers of this kind will become a regular feature before Saturday matches at Priestfield.

Mickey Peters was Gillingham's Top Marksmen with five goals, Phil Miller netted a hat-trick and Paul Dixon got two.

● Gillingham manager Basil Hayward took a dim view of the goal that John Simpson "let in against Tranmere.

"A silly goal like that and you are up against it," he said today. "The lads were playing well at first but anyone you give a goal to are going to be hard to beat."

He was also annoyed with centre forward Carl Gilbert for having his name taken.

Both Mel Machin and Brian Yeo are continuing the special elecrical ultrasonics treatment they started last week.

● John Simpson, Yeo and Machin have taken the lead in the Gillingham Supporters' Association's Player of the Year competition.

All the pool of first team players have received votes, including Brian Gibbs, who was transferred to Colchester United soon after the start of the season.

The competition, which closes on April 7, is open to members of the Supporters' Association and voting slips will be available at Wednesday's home match with Swindon.

GILBERT WAS A LONE STRIKER

Gillingham 1. Tranmere 1

BEATEN by an extra-time goal at Swindon only four days earlier and the departure of leading marksman Brian Yeo after just 27 minutes against Tranmere on Saturday through injury leaves no doubt in my mind that once you are down it is very difficult to get back up again. . . **writes TERRY OWEN.**

The opening stages of the first half produced a great deal of Gillingham promise but the departure of Yeo came as a hammer blow to Gills whose striking power, limited by the absence of skipper Gordon Riddick who was nearing the end of a 14-day suspension, was bereft of ideasfor the remainder of the game.

Carl Gilbert, with 16 goals to his credit this term in Reserve and first team games, stepped in for his tenth senior match of theseason and notched Gills' invaluable point-saver 12 minutes after the interval.

After two successive corners had been forced Meredith gained possession on the left. The winger held the ball, drew defenders out and floated over a perfect cross that saw **GILBERT** rise high above 'keeper Jimmy Cumbes and pivot Trevor Storton to head a picture goal.

But four minutes later Gilbert's joy was turned somewhat sour when he was booked by referee Mr. K.A. Wyn (Wolverhapton) after he had been awarded a foul against Storton.

Storton's mauling tactics in going for high balls had repeatedly not caught Mr. Wynn's eyes but on this occasion he was penalized and Gilbert had his name taken for back-chat.

Gilbert was Gillingham's only threat to the Rovers goal after Yeo's departure but his menace was quickly spotted by the Cheshire team who blotted him out for long periods with the close attention of Trevor Storton and Dave Moorcroft.

Terry Simpson prompted well from midfield and was the architect of Gillingham's attacks. But after an early ish both John Meredith and Derek Woodley were rarely able to make an impression on a Rovers defence that covered well

In the second half as Gillingham relied more and more on the lone efforts of Gilbert so chances became even more rare and long before the end 'keeper Cumbes was only troubled by long distance efforts.

At the back Gillingham were strong. Bill Williams commanded the middle with Bailey, and later young David Quirke, while Tony Weston and Mike Green rarely found themselves in trouble.

But for most of the time the match was riddled with fear. Rovers were content to settle back after their 32nd minute "freak" lead goal and Gillingham, who might have used more imagination in attack than they did, refused to change their system after their 57th minute equalizer.

It was another vital home point dropped, this time before the season's lowest gate, in the fight against relegation for Gillingham. But despite their long spells of pressure scoring ces were at a premium and long before the end supporters were trooping away from the Stadium as the play stagnated in midfield stalemate.

Gillingham dominated the opening ten minutes but it was not until the 14th minute that they showed up in front, when Smillie had a shot blocked.

LUCKY ESCAPE

The rebound produced a Tranmere attack and a lucky escape for the home goal as McNamee sent a long ball for Hudson to chase. Simpson came out of his goal to meet the challenge but was beaten by Hudson's toe and the ball bounced high and wide of the goal.

Gilbert replied for Gillingham with a power drive that flashed wide of the goal and then Rovers had a "goal" netted by Hudson disallowed for off-side.

Two chances were then created inside four minutes by Gillingham. A cross from Woodley beat Cumbes and his defenders only to miss Yeo's head, and then a clever flick forward by Gilbert saw Yeo burst into the box with the ball and fire straight at the advancing Cumbes.

In the 27th minute Yeo departed with a recurrence of the leg injury sustained at Swindon and five minutes later Rovers snatched their lead with what can only be termed a "freak" goal.

A free-kick 25 yards out was pushed square to left-half **ALAN KING** who fired in a low drive. Simpson went down to collect but at the last moment the ball seemed to rear off a pivot and passed over the 'keeper's shoulder.

Stunned by this setback Gillingham's only reply during the remainder of the half was a powerful 30-yard drive from Mike Green that scraped the crossbar and a half-hit shot from Gilbert, who was presented with an opportunity by a Meredith-Woodley movement, that was easily gathered by Cumbes.

Despite having the lion's share of the attacking play after the break Gillingham could not turn opportunities into goals. Gilbert, who had two team-mates in support, fired hastily over and then Ray Bailey saw a hard drive hooked away for a corner by Trevor Storton.

This Gillingham pressure brought a reward with Gilbert's headed goal in the 57th minute. But later as the home side's attacks were continually frustrated so Rovers occasionally advanced from their defensive shell to test the Gill's defence.

Rowland fired wide from a Beamish free-kick and then Hudson raced onto a through ball only to see his shot go inches wide. Almost immediately Cumbes was in action at the other end when he held a ground shot at full length from Bailey.

Tranmere almost snatched the lead in the 76th minute. Rowland found right-back Stan Storton who had moved up and a high centre beat the Gills' defence only for an unmarked McNamee to head onto the roof of the net.

With ten minutes ticking away so Gills' chance of grabbing the much-needed winner began to fade. Desperation was noticeable in their approach — too many passes went to Rovers defenders and lack of imiagination made moves stereotyped and easy to counter.

In the 80th minute Gilbert won a high ball and nodded it down for Green to fire wide. But just before the end Quirke almost succeeded in doing something that the "Tranmere attack had rarely looked capable of in the second half — that was beating Simpson.

His pass back to Simpson was high and wide of the veteran 'keeper. But fortunately Simpson, who had advanced from his goal, twisted to his left and palmed the ball down.

Gillingham: Simpson (J); Weston, Green, Simpson (T), Williams, Bailey; Woodley, Yeo (Quirke after 27 mins), Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith.

Tranmere Rovers: Cumbes; Storton (S), Robertson, Moorcroft, Storton (T), King; Beamish, Mathias, Hudson, Rowland, McNamee.

Attendance: 3,860.

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Swindon	32	20	7	5	52	23	47
Watford	30	18	7	5	48	17	43
Bournemouth	30	17	4	9	50	28	38
Luton	30	17	4	9	45	26	38
Plymouth	32	15	7	10	38	32	37
Torquay	31	14	6	11	39	30	34
Stockport	29	12	10	7	50	39	34
Reading	30	12	8	10	49	40	32
Tranmere	31	14	4	13	44	46	32
Brighton	34	11	9	14	52	51	31
Northampton	31	10	10	11	35	35	30
Walsall	32	9	11	12	33	33	29
Barnsley	30	10	9	11	38	44	29
Bristol R.	29	11	6	12	44	46	28
Rotherham	31	10	8	13	35	37	28
Barrow	30	11	6	13	40	51	28
Southport	27	11	4	12	45	43	26
Mansfield	28	9	8	11	36	35	26
Orient	29	8	10	11	33	42	26
Crewe	30	10	6	14	38	51	26
Hartlepool	32	6	12	14	28	60	24
GILLINGHAM	30	8	7	15	38	51	23
Shrewsbury	28	7	6	15	23	41	20
Oldham Ath.	32	6	7	19	27	59	19

No 36

H.T. 0-1

attend: 3,860

RIDDICK RETURNS TO FACE SWINDON

A GOOD gate—that's what Gillingham want and should get tomorrow for their Third Division match against top-of-the-table Swindon Town, who just beat them 1-0 in a fine match last week.

BY JOHN WINTER

Saturday's attendance for the Tranmere game was atrocious, only 3,860 and the smallest crowd since the Gills returned to the Third Division five seasons ago. It was also one of the lowest in their history—you have got to look back to the records of the darker regions of the Fourth Division days to find a lower gate.

Said manager Basil Hayward today "This is part of the season when attendances are falling generally. It's unfortunate and something you have got to try and overcome, but however you try to convince people they want results."

He hoped that Swindon would bring some supporters tomorrow and boost the gate.

The news of injured Mel Machin and Brian Yeo is not promising. "I won't know until tomorrow but we're having some problems" said Mr. Hayward. One good thing — Gordon Riddick will be back after his suspension.

● Three Gillingham players — Gordon Riddick, Derek Bellotti and Bobby the future are studying for Fold, — with an eye on their General Certificate of Education by correspondence courses.

Riddick is also busy with several other players, Ray Bailey, Mel Machin, John Meredith, Tony Weston and Brian Yeo, in taking an FA coaching course, partly at Charlton on Wednesday and partly at the weekend at Chatham.

"You have got to get these certificates to go on," explained one player.

Bournemouth date fixed

GILLINGHAM have rearranged their postponed matches against Bournemouth and Crewe Alexandra, but have yet to arrange a date for their visit to Shrewsbury.

Bournemouth, managed by former Gills' boss Freddie Cox, will visit Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday, 23 April. The following Wednesday the Gills will travel to Crewe.

NO FLASH-IN-THE-PAN VICTORY AS . . .

Gills bounce back with a great display

Gillingham 2, Swindon 0

AT a time when even their most die-hard supporters — what few there were remaining — began to look towards the Fourth Division, Gillingham came bouncing back to a superb win over top-of-the-table League Cup finalists Swindon Town at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday . . writes MURRAY EVANS.

And this was no flash-in-the-pan, two-lucky-goals victory.

Gillingham dominated throughout, played inspiring, exciting and, for once, rewarding football to gain two well-deserved points to ease relegation fears.

As manager Basil Hayward said afterwards: "It just shows how little there is between the top and the bottom clubs in the Division. I still believe there are few better than us in it."

Gillingham ably demonstrated this on Wednesday when the only matter in doubt was whether they could score enough goals to show their obvious superiority.

Swindon were better than most teams seen at the Stadium this season, but were unlucky to come on a night when the whole Gillingham team hit form.

With a new twin spearhead of Gordon Riddick and Carl Gilbert, Gills constantly looked dangerous up front and it was only justice that these two should score the goals.

Riddick, whose 14-day suspension seems to have done more good than harm by restoring an enthusiasm and confidence which was lacking in recent matches, almost laid on a goal after 10 minutes.

He outjumped Harland to head down a free-kick from Mike Green and Downsborough had to be quick to scoop the ball away from Gilbert's toes.

Two minutes later Riddick put Gillingham in front. Andy Smillie, also back to his best, picked up a bad clearance and pushed the ball through to Gilbert and **RIDDICK.** Gilbert played the sportsman and left it to his skipper, who turned and from the left of the goal sent a lifting shot crashing into the net.

Gillingham, with Gilbert and Riddick laying off some brilliant balls for each other, looked dangerous whenever they crossed the half-way line. But with the Swindon defence coming out very quickly they had to do a lot of work to get within striking range of the goal.

The Gills realised early on that they had the beating of Swindon and continued to move forward. Terry Simpson, continually prompting and probing, swung the ball out to Woodley who jinked past two defenders before crossing to Gilbert. The tall striker somehow survived two fierce tackles but shot straight into the 'keeper's arms.

At the other end the Swindon forwards were also thwarted — partly through Gillingham's intelligent use of the offside trap but mainly through some quick, tiger-like tackling from Williams, Weston, Quirke and Green, who allowed the Swindon front row little time to settle on the ball.

Swindon's only chance early on was a snap shot by Heath from the edge of the box which Simpson pushed over the bar.

The nippy right winger was Swindon's most dangerous forward in the early stages but he was soon blotted out of the game by Mike Green, who was later given time to move up while John Meredith dropped back.

This move looked promising, especially since Green has unquestionable heading power which might have proved decisive near goal, but having moved upfield he was rarely given the ball.

The change-round brought Swindon little relief. Seconds after the restart non-stop chasing by Carl Gilbert when the ball seemed irretrievable led to Woodley laying the ball back to Terry Simpson, whose first-time shot hit the post.

After 58 minutes he made amends. Meredith sent Riddick away on the left, the Gills' leader crossed from the line and **GILBERT** swept the ball home from the edge of the six-yard box.

Gillingham did not let up and might have scored further goals. Woodley twice held on to the ball too long, Riddick and Gilbert together fouled the 'keeper when both were clear, and then Riddick scraped the bar from a cross by Woodley.

Much of the Gills' domination was due to the fact that in the two crucial heading duels — Williams with Jones and Gilbert with Burrows — Gillingham were winning hands down nearly every time.

RESTRICTED

Consequently Swindon, with international winger Don Rogers played right out of the game, were in the main restricted to a few snap shots from the edge of the area.

They did, however, have two possible goal chances — once when Weston had to make a desperate lunge to foil Noble and the other when Rogers beat John Simpson but chipped the ball into the side netting.

The last four minutes brought the greatest excitement of the match. Gillingham should have increased their lead after Meredith drew Downsborough from his line before slipping the ball inside to Riddick.

The Gills' skipper miskicked in front of goal, but even then Gillingham might have scored if Gilbert had not been too slow to slide the ball in as it scraped the right-hand post.

Then followed an unbelievable goalmouth scramble which finished with Gilbert being robbed by a late tackle from Trollope.

A deservedly rewarding match for Gillingham, whose only disappointment must have been that such a mediocre gate, albeit considerably higher than Saturday's, should be present the day Gillingham turned on a performance of this calibre.

Gillingham: J. Simpson; Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Folds.

Swindon: Downsborough, Thomas, Trollope, Butler, Burrows, Harland, Heath, Smart, Jones (Penman), Noble, Rogers.

Attendance: 6,104

A great return to the side for Gillingham Skipper Gordon Riddick, following a 14-day suspension, as he puts the Gills in front after 12 minutes against Swindon on Wednesday. R.971

Carl Gilbert, who had earlier made it 2-0, misses a good scoring chance in the closing minutes as a Swindon defender flings himself across the face of the goal. R.972

Gills' boss may not risk Yeo

GILLINGHAM'S relegation fears were eased slightly with the splendid success against Swindon on Wednesday night but now the club is faced with vital away matches tomorrow (Saturday) and Monday against Orient and Hartlepool respectively.

The Gills climbed a place and a point above Hartlepool following Wednesday's success but the battle is only just beginning for the Stadium club.

Tomorrow's meeting with Orient at Brisbane Road is the clubs' sixth of the season. It all started on 14 August with a 2-2 League Cup first round — draw at Priestfield Stadium and followed three days later with a similar score at Gillingham in the League.

The Gills crashed 3-0 in the Cup replay but in November forced a 1-1 draw at Orient in the first round of the F.A. Cup and won the replay 2-1, Gordon Riddick bagging both goals.

Manager Basil Hayward will not decide on his line-up until this afternoon, but his problem will be who to leave out should injured stars, Brian Yeo and Mel Machin report fit.

MUSCLE INJURY

Both players have received regular physiotherapy treatment from Mr. Stanley Smith of Tunbridge Wells this week, and yesterday Mr. Hayward said Yeo was still sore from a muscle injury sustained at Swindon, while Machin was improving.

Carl Gilbert's displays against both Tranmere and Swindon have not gone unnoticed and he will be in the reckoning for both matches. His sustained strength as a twin spearhead with Gordon Riddick will trouble most defences.

Because of this Mr. Hayward might possibly rest Yeo for a couple of matches. An aggravated leg muscle can trouble a player for a long period and a fully-fit Yeo will be needed for the packed programme ahead.

"With the stiff matches ae have got coming up it is obvious we have got to be very careful with a player of Yeo's calibre. But we will have to make sure he does not miss too many games," said Mr. Hayward.

The Gills will travel by train to Hartlepool on Monday.

Tomorrow (Saturday), the Reserves meet Reading in a Football Combination fixture at the Stadium, and the Youths entertain Luton Town at the Garrison Ground.

No 37

H.T.: 1-0

attend: 6,104

Basil Hayward's Own Column

STADIUM'S STRENGTH IN DEPTH

THREE points from our last two matches is, I hope, the first stepping stone during a now packed programme in our efforts to get away from the bottom four in the Division Three table.

The matches were at home but although we have a stiff programme ahead of us Wednesday's outstanding win against the table-toppers and Football League Cup finalists Swindon must surely give the players that extra boost to confidence.

Remember we were without two regular players in Brian Yeo and Mel Machin. But both Carl Gilbert and David Quirke slotted in nicely and certainly proved that there is strength in depth in the Stadium playing staff.

I have always believed that at Gillingham we have one of the strongest playing staffs in the Division and this is borne out by Wednesday's performance *and the number of enquiries* made during the season for Gillingham players.

VERY EFFECTIVE

Versatility is a strong point at Gillingham and on Wednesday we proved that we are still a very effective force at home in the Third Division.

Heading ability is certainly not a strong feature of most sides' defensive make-up. Here we are fortunate to have the experience of Gordon Riddick and strength of Carl Gilbert up front, who can be reinforced by both Mike Green and Bill Williams, to provide a major threat.

No-one knows more than the players and myself that we have a grim fight in front of us. Our visits to Orient and Hartlepool — on Saturday and Monday — are crucial because they find themselves in a similar position.

We will do well if we can come away from Orient with a point and one or two at Hartlepool. But one point from each visit would be highly satisfactory — especially from Orient who, I feel, like Gillingham, have had an unlucky season.

Rewarding visits would put the players in a happy frame of m'd for the following two home matches against Barnsley and Crewe.

The target we have our sights on is to escape from the bottom four — even if it is by just one point. Then I hope we will have gained a lesson and can plan for the following season.

March 16 is deadline date for buying players. I have my eye on two players but finance prevents my obtaining them. However, our biggest problem is that we might be forced to sell if an offer is made and is difficult to turn down.

It is always a setback to sell. Time is spent building up a side and it is annoying to have a piece taken out of it now and again. The only thing we can do is to bring along our young players.

But we will be unable to avoid selling players unless things alter. They have got to change rapidly — the majority of the Gillingham players are attracting interest.

Saturday's gate was dismal and quite honestly the attendance for Wednesday's match against Swindon was disappointing.

Hayward: We shall escape

WEDNESDAY night's win against Third Division leaders Swindon should have boosted Gillingham's morale sky-high for their two tough away games at Orient tomorrow and Hartlepool on Monday night.

Manager Basil Hayward says he will be quite satisfied with two points from the two matches, which would maintain the target of a point a game needed to save the Gills from relegation.

The manager's faith in his team has never wavered through thick or thin, and he's still confident they will steer clear of trouble.

"They have the potential and the ability," he said. "What they have to find is that little bit of extra determination at times when things go against us."

Commenting on Wednesday's game, Mr. Hayward said victory against Swindon was reward for that little extra effort and determination in the tackle.

Unfit

Swindon manager Danny Williams had told him that he could not understand why Gillingham were so low in the table.

"Apparently he has seen us play a few times this season, and every time we've played well," he added.

"It's going to be tough, but I am confident we can do it. We've got to get down to it away, and make sure of our home games."

An unchanged team will take the field against Orient in the sixth game between the clubs this season, with honours even so far — one win each and three draws.

Brian Yeo and Mel Machin are both still unfit, and are not likely to be considered for Monday's visit to Hartlepool.

The 'Pool called off last night's game against Crewe because several of their players were suddenly taken ill, but Basil said today that he had heard nothing about Monday's match being affected.

The form of Carl Gilbert, who scored in both the home games against Tranmere and Swindon, will be watched with the closest interest.

"He played quite well on Wednesday, but the big test for him will come in the away games," said Mr. Hayward.

Team: J. Simpson, Weston, Green T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Folds.

Orient have named 13 players. There is a doubt about Tommy Taylor, who is in bed with a cold, but if he is fit the side will be unchanged from last week: Goddard, Howe, Rofe, Jones, Mancini, Harper, Allen, Bullock, Taylor, Slater, Parmenter, Massey, Bloomfield.

Gillingham Reserves are serves in the Football Combination tomorrow (3 p.m.), but the Gills' boss has not yet announced the side.

● Both Gillingham Supporters Association and the Blue and White Association are running coach parties of Gillingham fans to the Orient match tomorrow.

● The POST will carry a special feature on the Supporters Association in next Tuesday's edition.

Basil praises the fans

THOUGH disappointed with not taking both points, Gillingham manager Basil Hayward was pleased with his side's general performance and also very satisfied with the attendance of 6,000.

"Spectators have shown a genuine interest in us. The *gates for the past two* matches having been very good for a relegation-troubled side," he said.

It was obviously worthwhile putting the kick-off back to 7.30 and avoiding a clash with the Grand National on television in the afternoon.

Gills are unbeaten in eight matches, six of them drawn.

Basil mentioned the performance of David Quirke who has settled in after a month in the first team and is playing very well. It was all a question of confidence, said the manager, who is hoping that Ray Bailey will soon be back to the form he is capable of and which helped them through the fringe of promotion last season.

There are no additional injury problems and Mr. Hayward confirms that Mel Machin will soon be back to fitness. He cannot say whether it will be before or after Easter, during which Gills are away to Oldham and Mansfield and home to Barrow — all involved in the relegation fight.

Bob Harrison, the 21-year-old Gillingham striker who made one first team appearance against Reading, has been loaned to Margate. He scored two goals for them on Saturday in the Southern League Premier Division match against Bedford, where Basil Hayward used to be manager. Margate won 5-1.

Challenged by Swindon's Stan Harland, Gordon Riddick was narrowly wide with this power drive.

R 974

GILBERT POINT-SAVER AT SECOND ATTEMPT

H.T. 1-0

No.38 attend:

"I know it's here, somewhere." Gillingham 'keeper John Simpson dives to save during the game with Orient.

GILLINGHAM Football Supporters' Association have just formed a mini-girl squad to help with fund raising. Here they are at Priestfield Stadium with Gillingham players David Peach, Derek Belotti, Mel Machin and Brian Yeo. The girls are Ruth Gulvin, Linda Jones, Zandra Bristow and Carol Cook. It all adds up to bright soccer!

Orient 1, Gillingham 1

DESPITE the outcome of an almost totally drab and boring 90 minutes at Brisbane Road on Saturday, this was by no means a case of Gillingham playing a rearguard action in a bid to salvage a point against overwhelming opposition..writes **MURRAY EVANS.**

Gillingham won the point manager Basil Hayward aimed for, but might easily have had two if, yet again, finishing had not let them down in a match which was the clubs' sixth meeting of the season.

As one Orient fan said after the match: "It was a good job they were playing as badly as we were."

The Gills produced flashes of good football, verging occasionally on the superb display against Swindon on Wednesday, but this time virtually nothing paid off and the game petered out right from the kick-off into a state of midfield stalemate.

OUTRUNNING

With long, through-balls down the middle, a tactic employed by both sides in the early stages, defenders were repeatedly outrunning the forwards and tapping the ball back to the 'keeper.

Carl Gilbert missed two half-chances early on, but a goal from either side would have been a grave injustice to the defences who did such a good job in blotting out the strikers.

After some hard work by John Meredith, Derek Woodley pushed the ball back to Terry Simpson who came up to try and break the deadlock, but he blazed high over the bar from the edge of the area.

For the most part Gillingham were nowhere near the dominating force they were on Wednesday. Gilbert and Riddick, whose dual striking performance did so much for that match, were running for each other but their clever touches were not paying off this time.

Gilbert had another chance following a cross by Quirke and he was unlucky when his hooked shot rebounded off Mancini. But with a second identical opportunity he put the ball over the bar.

For Orient, wingers Slater and Parmenter provided the greatest threat to the Gills' defence but John Simpson was taking all high crosses well, except for a corner from Slater which Mancini headed just wide.

After 38 minutes the deadlock was broken. Either side might have done it, but it was Orient who scored the goal to bring a little sparkle into the game.

Malcolm Slater had trouble in beating the challenge of Green and Meredith and passed back to Mancini. From the return pass he crossed for **PARMENTER**, completely unmarked, to pick his spot and shoot past a helpless John Simpson.

A foul on David Quirke by Dyson almost led to an equalizer immediately afterwards. From 40 yards Green put the ball high into the area where 'keeper Ray Goddard, who had twice before seemed uncertain in the air, missed it completely. The ball bounced off Mancini's legs but Gilbert was too slow to take advantage.

Gillingham could have found themselves further in arrears by the change-round when they committed the same crime which led to Orient's goal. Again they left Parmenter unmarked when Slater, yet again beating Mike Green, floated over a cross, but this time Simpson saved well.

Gillingham almost levelled shortly after the break when Gilbert, fumbling his own chance, passed back to Riddick. The striker shot first time but Goddard, who originally dived the wrong way, recovered well to save the shot at the second attempt.

The second half was distinctly more entertaining than the first, and much of this was attributable to referee, Mr. Clive Thomas (Treorchy), who kept interest in the game alive with some most curious decisions.

Following a brilliant through-ball from Terry Simpson and a fine run by Woodley, Taylor blatantly handled in the Orient area and Gillingham can count themselves desperately unlucky that a penalty decision was not given.

It was, however, from a spot-kick that Gillingham did eventually get the goal, and ultimately the point they deserved.

After 74 minutes Gordon Riddick was pulled down inside the box by Mancini and Mr. Thomas had no hesitation in awarding a penalty.

Gilbert almost wasted his best opportunity of the match when he shot so tamely that Goddard had no trouble in stopping the shot. The 'keeper could not hold the ball and **GILBERT**, following up, pushed home the rebound despite a bad bounce and a late challenge by Rofe.

Just prior to this, good running by Gilbert and a short pass to Meredith set off another move which almost resulted in a goal. The hard-working winger just managed to get in a cross which was stopped by a defender as the ball ran across the face of the goal, and Goddard had to pounce quickly to rob Riddick of a glorious opportunity.

Orient came back strongly and John Simpson was called on to pull off one of his best saves from a snap shot by Bullock. From the ensuing corner Simpson pushed the ball over the bar as it dipped into the top corner of the net.

Barry Dyson missed Orient's best chance of a winning goal when his shot from four yards, following a goalmouth scramble, was blocked by a joint effort of John Simpson and Tony Weston.

In the main, Gillingham, apart from one or two lapses, were as strong as ever at the back where Bill Williams was outstanding. Mike Green had constant trouble in containing Malcolm Slater, but this threat was virtually ended when John Meredith dropped back as a reinforcement.

Orient: Goddard, Howe, Rofe, Harper, Mancini, Taylor, Slater, Bullock, Allen, Dyson, Parmenter. Sub: Jones.

Gillingham: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.

ANDY SMILLIE joined the Gills from Southend and is now finding form after being dogged by injury and illness.

Now in his 12th season with Gillingham F.C., John Simpson, a popular favourite with the Priestfield Stadium crowd, played his 500th first team match for the Gills against Barnsley on Friday. As a token of the Blue and Whites Association's appreciation for John's services, chairman Mr Harold France presented the veteran goalkeeper with an electronic table gas lighter just before the kick-off.

No 39
H.T. 1-0
attend:

'Must show more determination'

COMMENTING on Saturday's 1-1 draw against Orient at Brisbane Road, Gillingham manager Basil Hayward said he was disappointed with the team's display following the performance given against Swindon only three days earlier.

"Naturally I was pleased that we came away with a point but we could have had two if the chances that came our way had been taken.

"It was a good game on a rather difficult surface, but I was disappointed with our display after such a fine performance the players gave to beat Swindon," said Mr. Hayward.

"Our goal came from the penalty spot but I feel we should have had two other penalties for blatant hand-balls in the area that went unpunished.

"But we must show more determination when we go in for the ball. We have the ability to be a very good side but unless that determination is shown then we are going to lose points," he said.

Gillingham now look forward to two home matches. On Friday, Barnsley, who crashed 1-0 at home to the Gills in August, visit the Stadium for a 7.30 p.m. kick-off. Visitors the following Wednesday will be Crewe.

On Saturday, the Reserves have a Football Combination match at Ipswich.

Gills fight on for a vital point

HARTLEPOOL 1, GILLINGHAM 1

THE after-match comment from one of the few Gillingham supporters who made the long trip north for last night's game against fellow-strugglers Hartlepool summed the match up very well: "That's one of the luckiest points we will ever win." He was one of only 2,400 spectators.

But lucky or not, it was a point that keeps the Gills hopes of escaping the drop to the Fourth Division very much alive. Play was generally uninspired and three players were booked.

Gillingham allowed Hartlepool to control more than 80 per cent of the game and one could sympathise with Terry Simpson after all his hard work, only to see it wasted by a poor striking force, with Gordon R'ddick the main offender.

Not only did Hartlepool take the lead in the second minute, but they threatened to extend it several times while the Gillingham forwards were playing up against the brick wall defence formed by centre-half John Gill and right-back Alan Goad.

The style of this game was illustrated on the hour when with Hartlepool pressing hard but rather desperately for another goal, centre-forward Bobby Cummings blasted a penalty over the bar.

The spot-kick was awarded after defender Tony Parry had been brought down by Bill Williams as he prepared to shoot.

Hartlepool's lead, which lasted for more than 80 minutes, came when a Gill clearance bounced high in front of **Terry Bell** and the inside man lofted the ball over the outstretched arms of the advancing John Simpson.

After this early set-back Gillingham knew they would have to come out and move forward in order to gain a point or two which could be regarded as having double value in this bottom-of-the-table clash.

Gillingham introduced Ray Bailey for Derek Woodley with 25 minutes to go.

The Gillingham goal, five minutes from the end, made up for all the earlier mistakes when **Riddick** headed goalwards after a good Mike Green centre and goalkeeper Allen could only help the ball into the net.

Towards the end of the game play became especially ragged with Carl Gilbert and John Meredith of Gillingham and Hartlepool's Gill being booked for needless fouls.

Hartlepool: Allen, Goad, Drysdale, Parry, Gill, McLeod, Bell, Cummings, Thompson, Wright, Young. Sub: Atkinson.

Gillingham: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley (Bailey), Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith.

Danger zone

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barrow	31	11	6	14	40	53	[illegible]
Mansfield	30	9	9	12	37	36	27
Southport	30	11	5	14	40	48	27
Gillingham	33	9	9	15	42	52	27
Crewe	31	10	6	15	38	53	26
Hartlepool	34	6	13	15	29	54	25
Oldham	34	8	7	19	35	61	[illegible]
Shrewsbury	30	7	7	16	23	44	21

GORDON RIDDICK — his header brought about the Gills' goal and made up for earlier misses.

John Simpson's long service recognized

GILLINGHAM'S long serving goalkeeper, John Simpson, made his 500th first team appearance for the club against Barnsley on Friday evening.

And shortly before the kick-off Mr. Harold France, chairman of the Blue and Whites Association, presented John with an electronic gas table lighter from the Association.

Afterwards Mr. France told the Chatham Standard: "It gave us great pleasure to make the presentation and as chairman of John's Testimonial Fund I shall be even more delighted when the Testimonial game is played so that the Fund can be wound up and John can be given his true dessert."

Cheer the Gills to safety

THE Post are supporting the Gills all the way in their spirited fight against relegation. Are YOU?

At this stage of the season, when only two points separate Bristol Rovers in 15th place from Gillingham in 21st, every point is vital.

So is every bob taken at the turnstiles and collected for the club's various fund-raising schemes.

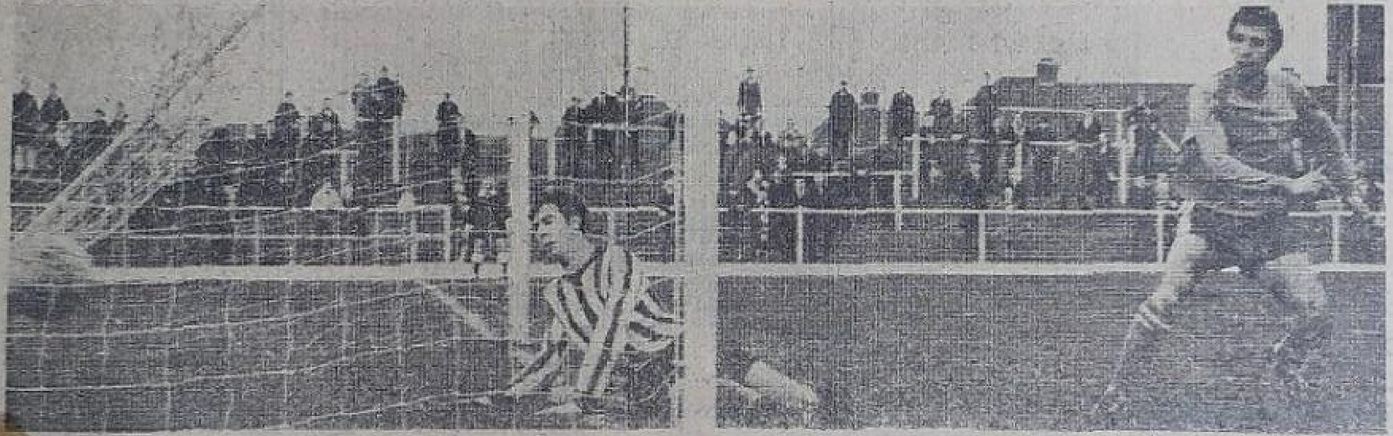
So let's have more support for the Gills in the crucial weeks ahead. The way the lads are playing just now they certainly deserve it.

And how about a special cheer tonight for two of them? Veteran 'keeper John Simpson, always a great favourite with the fans in his 12 seasons at Priestfield, is making his 500th first team appearance tonight against Barnsley, and full-back Tony Weston his 150th.

With another home game against Crewe to follow next Wednesday, the Gills have a splendid chance to pull in four points and give themselves a bit of breathing space.

It's still a long, hard road ahead, but manager Basil Hayward is confident his team will win through. Your support between now and the end of the season could make all the difference.

And don't forget to follow all the latest news of the Gills day by day in the POST.



GOALS like this from Brian Yeo, who has missed the last few weeks through injury, can turn the tide in Gills' favour.

BASIL PONDERS ON THE POINTS

ANY manager with a team in the lower reaches of a division has a full share of worries. This applies to Basil Hayward, of course—a man who cannot escape from the problems of finding crucial points.

TONIGHT'S TEAMS

GILLINGHAM (from): J. Simpson; Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub.: Bailey.

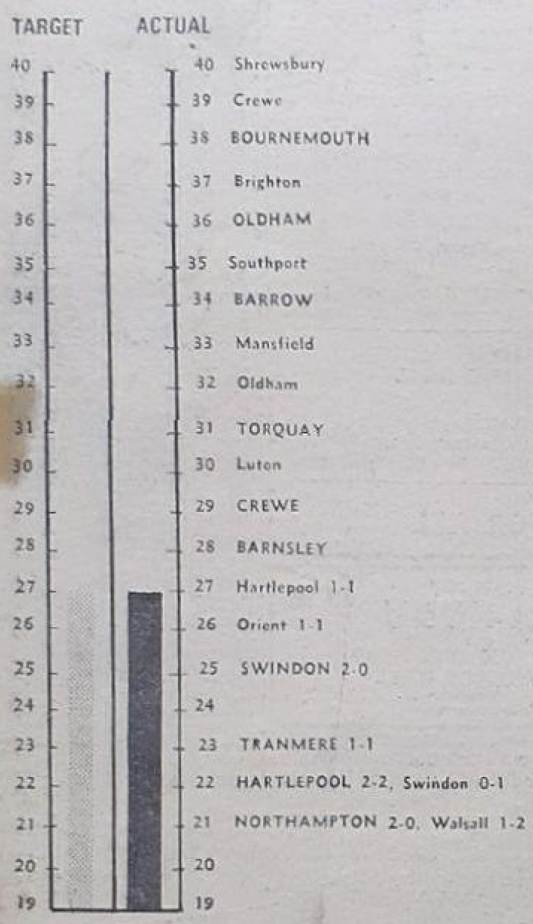
BARNSLEY (from): Ironside, Murphy, Booth, Bettany, Raggett, Howard, Earnshaw, Evans, Loyden, Bradbury, Robson, Hampstead.

Safety guide

SINCE the Post set the Gills a safety target of a point a match two months ago, the team have matched it exactly with eight points from eight games.

If they can keep this up for their remaining 13 fixtures, they will end the season with a total of 40 points — which history shows is usually enough to avoid relegation.

Keep a check on Gillingham's progress with this safety barometer, which will appear regularly in the Post.



JOHN SIMPSON, one of the most popular players ever on the Priestfield scene, now completing his 12th season with the Gills.

MEL MACHIN, a cool head in defence. Another player out of the side recently through injury

GORDON RIDDICK, club captain and a player who has more than proved his versatility.

DEREK WOODLEY, Gills' fastest forward and a great favourite with the crowd since coming to the club from Southend.

Third division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Swindon	34	20	7	7	53	27	47
Watford	33	19	9	5	53	30	47
Luton Town	32	18	5	9	48	28	41
Bournemouth	33	17	5	10	52	31	39
Plymouth	35	15	9	11	40	35	39
Stockport	32	13	11	8	35	46	37
Torquay	33	15	7	11	43	31	37
Brighton	37	13	10	14	58	52	36
Northampton	34	13	10	11	42	37	36
Tranmere	34	15	3	14	47	50	33
Reading	33	12	9	12	53	49	33
Walsall	34	11	11	12	36	34	33
Rotherham	34	12	9	13	41	39	33
Barnsley	32	11	9	12	42	47	31
Bristol Rovers	32	11	7	14	47	53	29
Orient	32	9	11	12	37	40	29
Crewe	32	11	6	15	41	53	28
Barrow	31	11	6	14	40	53	28
Southport	30	11	5	14	46	40	27
Mansfield	29	9	9	11	37	30	27
Gillingham	33	9	9	15	42	53	27
Hartlepool	34	6	13	15	30	54	25
Oldham	35	8	7	20	33	64	23
Shrewsbury	31	7	7	17	26	46	[illegible]

GORDON RIDDICK and Terry Simpson combine to keep a Northampton player off the ball. The Gills completed their first double of the season with two wins against Northampton and will be looking for another one tonight.

Yeo fights for fitness

BRIAN YEO, Gillingham's leading scorer this season with 16 goals, who has missed the last three games through injury, was hard at work training in the misty rain at Priestfield Stadium today in a bid to regain his first team place.

He cannot be ruled out entirely for tonight's Third Division home game against Barnsley, although it is more than likely that manager Basil Hayward will delay recalling his top marksman until the following home game against Crewe next Wednesday to ensure his complete fitness, particularly in view of tonight's heavy going.

The Priestfield pitch has absorbed a lot of water in the past 48 hours and is likely to cut up a good deal as the game progresses.

Two Gillingham players will reach milestones in their careers with tonight's match.

Veteran 'keeper John Simpson, now in his 12th season with the club and as popular as ever with the fans, will be making his 500th first team appearance since he was signed from Lincoln City for £750 in 1957.

This will be his 466th league game, and he has also played in 19 FA Cup-ties and 15 Football League Cup-ties.

It is fitting that such a grand servant of the club should make it 500 up in his testimonial season.

For full-back Tony Weston the Barnsley game will mark his 150th first team appearance. Also in the Gills' squad is wing-half Ray Bailey, who is on the 100 mark exactly.

Can Gillingham extend their unbeaten run to five games? They must stand a good chance, as Barnsley have won only three of their 16 away matches. A useful home record accounts for their reasonably safe middle of the table position.

The Gills have done well to average a point a game over the past couple of months, but obviously their bid to avoid relegation depends as much on what their fellow strugglers achieve as on their own efforts.

Opportunity

This was strikingly demonstrated by Crewe's 3-0 home win against Oldham on Wednesday night, which not only shot them four places up the table but plunged Gillingham back into the dreaded bottom four.

A glance at the accompanying Third Division table shows clearly that the Gills are by no means out of the wood and that there is certainly no room for complacency at Priestfield.

The Kent club have played more games than all the four teams immediately above them, and have a much worse goal average than two of them.

But with two home games in the next five days Gillingham have a grand opportunity to pull in four points and give themselves a bit of breathing space. They can also complete a double against Barnsley, having won by the only goal at Oakwell way back in August.

Manager Hayward will select his team from **J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.**

● Rearranged first team games include Bournemouth at home on Wednesday, April 23, and Shrewsbury away on Monday May 5.

● Gillingham Reserves' visit to Ipswich in the Football Combination has been postponed from tomorrow until Tuesday, as the Ipswich ground is required for a county match.

● Outstanding reserve games rearranged by the club are Luton away on Monday, March 24; Bristol City home on Thursday April 24; and Arsenal home on Tuesday April 29.

● A Soccer Special of the Post, containing two pages of pictures and chat, will be on sale at tonight's match.

● For full report and picture coverage of the game, see the Post on Monday.

LETTER WORTH £500?

HAROLD FRANCE, chairman of the Blue and White Supporters' Association, accidentally left an old letter with his address on it in a telephone box when he travelled to the Swindon match three weeks ago.

In a short time the letter was forwarded back to him by a Hungerford man who found it in the telephone box, and Mr. France wrote to thank him, offering to recompense him for his trouble.

Mr. France had a letter from the Hungerford man this week — asking for a loan of £500!

ON THE MEND

AFTER an indifferent start to the season Barnsley—promoted to Division Three at the end of last season—are at last getting into something like their normal stride.

Goals have come more often recently and defensive slips are none too prevalent this season, apart from that shock 1-0 defeat at Oakwell last Saturday by second from the bottom Oldham Athletic.

It was the Reds' first home defeat since their second home match of the season on August 24 when, incidentally, they lost 1—0 to Gillingham. Since that time they have improved tremendously.

One player who has helped bring about that change is big centre-forward Eddie Loyden, who has cracked in seven goals in nine appearances since joining the Reds from Shrewsbury around Christmas for £6,000.

Barnsley's top scorer, ironically, is skipper and centre-half Eric Winstanley, who has eight goals to his credit.

DANGER

He is not through injury at the moment.

Normally, Winstanley spells danger every time he leaves his defensive kick or a free-kick, and he brings out the best in the other younger members of the defence, namely, Pat Howard, who has attracted many First Division scouts, and full-back Dave Booth.

These are the names which spring to mind whenever Barnsley are mentioned, but one must never forget the electrifying speed of wingman Bob Earnshaw, the craft of Jimmy Robson and the non-stop midfield play of John Bettany.

Team from: Ironside, Murphy, Booth, Bettany, Raggett, Howard, Earnshaw, Evans, Lloyden, Bradbury, Robson, Hampstead.

● Barnsley are managed by John Steele and have achieved their share of honours in the past. They even won the FA Cup in 1912.

Three Third Division (North) championships have come the way of the Oakwood club—in 1934, 1939 and 1955.

JOY and anguish. Gordon Riddick joins the crowd in a cheer as the Gills score. Northampton players can only stand in dismay.

MARK'S FORTY WINKS LASTED TEN HOURS

WHERE'S Mark Agate? That was the question on everyone's lips at the annual meeting of Gillingham Supporters' Association.

For their popular Press Officer, who had not missed an annual meeting for about eight years, was not there.

Amnesia? Accident? Wrong date? All these possibilities flashed through the mind as the meeting progressed and afterwards, two members rushed off to see what had happened to Mark.

They found him . . . asleep! Blissfully unaware of the concern, tired out from his all-night drive up to Hartlepool for Monday's match, and back again, he decided to snatch forty winks after lunch and slept instead for ten hours!

UNCHANGED GILLS MEET BARNSLEY

John Simpson plays 500th match tonight

GILLINGHAM supporters can reserve a special cheer at tonight's (Friday) home league match with Barnsley for long-serving goalkeeper and popular favourite at Priestfield Stadium — John Simpson.

Having his 12th season with Gillingham, Simpson will t[illegible] out onto the Stadium pitch with an unchanged team that drew with Orient and Hartlepool for his 500th first team match with the Kent club.

Simpson, signed from Lincoln City in 1957 for £750, will be making his 466th League appearance. He has also played in 19 F.A. Cup-ties and 15 Football League Cup matches.

His League match record with Gillingham is: 1957-58, 28; '58-59, 40; '59-60, 46; '60-61, 44; '61-62, 37; '62-63, 37; '63-64, 46 (promotion year from Div. 4); '64-65, 45; '65-66, 46; '66-67, 37; '67-68, 46.

CENTRE-HALF

Simpson, having a Testimonial season with the Gills, has not always been a goalkeeper. He won under-18 county honours for Westmoreland as a centre-half in a match against Northumberland.

During his Army service he played in Scottish Junior football — on a par with the Southern League — for 19 months and was later a part-time professional with Netherfield in the Lancashire Combination, before joining Lincoln City where he had a season of Second Division football.

The Football League's longest serving goalkeeper was Sam Bartram, who made a total of 613 first team games for Charlton. This was made up of: League 582 and F.A. Cup 31.

Another Gillingham player reaches a milestone in his career with the club tonight — full back Tony Weston makes his 150th first team appearance. On the 100 mark is wing half Ray Bailey.

After encouraging performances which brought a point from matches at Orient and Hartlepool, Gillingham continue their bid to escape from the relegation zone with home matches tonight (Barnsley) and on Wednesday (Crewe).

The visit of Barnsley tonight gives the Gills the chance of a League "double" — the only goal of the match gave Gillingham both points at Barnsley in August.

NOT FIT

But news from the Stadium yesterday (Thursday) was that both Brian Yeo and Mel Machin, who have been receiving extensive physiotherapy treatment and are now back in training, will not be fit to play against the Yorkshire club tonight.

Manager Basil Hayward said he would select his team from the 12 players that went to Hartlepool: J. Simpson; Weston, Green; T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woolley, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.

A 3-0 home win by Crewe on Wednesday night sent Gillingham back into the bottom four of the division. But with two home matches in front of them the Gills now have a great chance to improve their anti-relegation drive.

Mr. Hayward said this week: "The players did well to come away with something from the Orient and Hartlepool matches. Now we must step up our performance in the next two home games and make sure that points are not lost."

WINSTANLEY OUT

Barnsley will be without centre-half and captain, Eric Winstanley, who will miss his third consecutive match because of a strained thigh muscle.

Manager John Steele will therefore be bringing 12 players from Barnsley where, he tells us, there is about seven inches of snow on the pitch.

He will choose from: Ironside, Murphy, Booth, Bettany, Raggett, Howard, Earnshaw, Evans, Loyden, Robson, Bradbury and Hamstead.

The Gills' boss has often referred in recent weeks to the interest shown by other clubs in some Gillingham players.

Latest news is that Swindon Town continue to make enquiries after skipper Gordon Riddick and Nottingham Forest are interested in reserve keeper Derek Bellotti.

Last day for signing players who would be eligible to play in the current season is Sunday. But yesterday Mr. Hayward said: "If the right offer is made and is acceptable to the club, then it will be placed before the Board. But at the present moment we certainly do not want to lose any of our players.

"It is interesting to know that so many clubs are looking at our players. But our aim is to make Gillingham a very good club," he said.

AT SHREWSBURY

Gillingham have re-arranged their outstanding League match with Shrewsbury Town. It will be played at Gay Meadow on Monday, 5 May.

Other matches that have been arranged by the club are: 24 March, Luton Reserves (A); 23 April, Bournemouth (H); 24 April, Bristol City Reserves (H); 29 April, Arsenal Reserves (H).

Tomorrow's (Saturday) Football Combination match at Ipswich has been postponed until Tuesday. Tomorrow, the Youths have a South East Counties League fixture at Watford.

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	33	19	9	5	53	30	47
Swindon	34	20	7	7	53	27	47
Luton	32	18	5	9	48	28	41
Bournemouth	32	17	5	10	52	31	39
Plymouth	35	15	9	11	40	35	39
Barnsley	32	11	9	12	42	47	31
Bristol R	32	11	7	14	47	61	29
Orient	32	9	11	12	37	45	29
Crewe	31	11	6	14	40	53	28
Barrow	32	11	6	15	41	53	28
Mansfield	29	9	9	11	37	36	27
Southport	30	11	6	13	46	[illegible]	[illegible]
GILLINGHAM	33	9	9	15	42	[illegible]	[illegible]
Hartlepool	34	6	13	15	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Oldham Ath.	35	8	7	20	[illegible]	64	23
Shrewsbury	31	7	7	17	[illegible]	[illegible]	21

Gillingham player John Arnott, Brentford and ex-Gillingham full-back Dennis Hunt, and Charlton goalkeeper Charlie Wright with "pupils," including Gordon Riddick, who are taking their F.A. Coaching Badge course, at Maidstone Road, Chatham, last Sunday morning. R.1007

Supporters' donations down £1,700

DONATIONS from Gillingham F.C. Supporters' Association to the parent club last year totalled £7,500 — a drop of £1,700 on the previous year.

These figures were revealed at the Association's annual meeting on Tuesday when secretary, Mr. L. Marmara, in answer to a question from Mr. Edward Filley, said the previous year's donation was £9,200., and for the year July 1965 to June 1966 the figure was £12,650.

The Association's main source of income, the sale of daily draw tickets, last year raised £19,876 5s. 1d., of which £10,343 10s. was paid in prizes.

Total raised on the competition account was £20,820 4s. 1d. — a profit of £624 8s. 6d.

In the catering account, tea bar receipts were £3,306 3s. 7d., and the profit £637 15s. 6d. The sales shop made a profit of £53 5s. 8d.

Mr. Filley also asked how the £7,500 compared with donations from the Blue and Whites, Gillingham's other supporting organization, but Mr. Marmara said he could not answer for them.

Mr. Filley added he thought the time had come for a re-think on what the Association should do with its money.

"For years and years we have made a donation to the parent company," he said. "The time has come for new thinking.

"You have got to think of the cash customer and not the paid members of the club. The paying of players is the directors' responsibility. And I think it is time to start using the money for ground improvements," he said.

UNANIMOUS DECISION

Vice-chairman, Mr. J. Pynn, replied that years ago this was the Association's policy. But after a unanimous decision at the annual meeting they stopped paying for ground improvements and began paying the money straight to the club.

"There is not much point in having a new stand if there is no football club, and there surely won't be if the club does not get more money," he said. "What we have to do is either get more people to come through the turnstiles or sell more draw tickets."

This comment brought expressions of general assent from most members.

Mr. Pynn then suggested the Association might hold a competiton with a small prize for ideas of a new fund-raising competition, and chairman, Mr. W. Thomas, said this would be considered by the committee.

Mr. E. Brown, a newcomer to the Association, asked if something could be done to improve the Gordon Road stand during the close season, and club chairman, Dr. C. S. Grossmark, replied that £70 was spent on it only three weeks ago.

Mr. W. A. Wooldridge said that for an Association representing a Third Division club the gathering at the Livingstone Arms, numbering fewer than three dozen, was "ridiculous."

Mr. Marmara said the dropping off in membership was not through lack of trying. "Every year we write to all the old members to try and get them back, but we have little success," he said.

Mr. Pynn then asked the club manager, Mr. Basil Hayward, if he had any ideas in which the Supporters' Association might be boosted.

"The trouble with supporters," said Mr Hayward, "is that after the first few weeks of the season, if you are not in the League Cup or the top four in the table people are not going to come along until the FA cup comes round. And once you're out of that, it's bye-bye until next season."

Mr. Vincent Godley asked if the club had tried regular Friday night football in preference to Saturdays. At Southend, he said, this was done, gates had risen by between two and three thousand and the crowd seemed to get far better football.

Dr. Grossmark replied that the Football League frowned on this practice and that clubs were in fact, fined for it. The fact that the football looked better was, he said, an optical illusion.

"But one which we are not against you having," he added.

Mr. Mark Agate, who was not at the meeting, proposed by letter the re-election of committee members Mr. A. Bristow, Mr. D. Lindsay, Mr. O. Svensson, Mr. A. Thomas and Mr. S. Walter. This was seconded by Mr. A. Bradley and they were re-elected.

John Simpson — Gillingham's veteran goalkeeper who steps out tonight (Friday) against Barnsley at Priestfield Stadium for his 500th first team game with the Gills. J 211

Basil Hayward's Own Column

GAME MUST GO ON AT ALL COSTS

WHAT next? Despite the Football League's view that sickness is not a normal trading hazard of football, unlike injuries, I am still mystified that Wednesday's vital home match with Crewe was postponed because some Crewe players had been hit by the 'flu bug.

I realise that we as a club can do nothing but accept the League view, but I honestly feel that far too many excuses are creeping into the game to postpone fixtures.

Obviously we were looking for a win against Crewe who find themselves in the lower region of the table like ourselves. Only a shade separates the two clubs in goal average, although Crewe have a match in hand, but two points on Wednesday would have lifted us up a few places and given the players added heart for Saturday's match at Luton.

NOT TOO HAPPY

There are many people, like myself, who are not too happy with sickness being a cause for a match to be called off. I have always been brought up to believe that the match must go on at all costs, unless ground conditions were against the game being played.

This is not the first time it has affected Gillingham and Wednesday's postponement had a direct effect on other clubs in the lower regions.

Only a fortnight ago Hartlepool postponed a Friday League match because of players having 'flu. They then were able to declare themselves fit by 10 a.m. on the Saturday to meet us on the Monday, after we had played a tough match at Orient only two days before.

Another example is that Barrow postponed two matches against then promotion-chasers, Bournemouth and Luton Town. Sickness was the reason given, but Barrow went out and signed two players and later picked up three points.

If you care to take a glance at the Division Three table Barrow might possibly be now finding themselves in the same position as us.

The League has quoted an example of a ballet company staging a performance without two advertized stars due to illness and infringing the new Trades Description Act.

But as far as Football Clubs are concerned, and Gillingham in particular, the eleven first team players are recognized as being equal, although the fans might have their own favourites.

Programmes and posters had been printed for Wednesday's match, but while the cash loss was not great it was sufficient to hurt a small club like Gillingham.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Swindon on becoming the second Third Division team to win the Football League Cup. It was a great boost for our division and indicated that the standard of football in the division is something not to be sneered at.

But the cup victory against Arsenal was not only a triumph for the club. It was also a tribute to the terrific support the club has maintained since being relegated a few seasons ago.

Despite going down in League status, the Swindon fans have stuck by their club and have been rewarded with a major cup success and a team that is on the fringe of promotion back to Division Two.

Unfortunately, we at Gillingham have never been able to taste the sweet success of a good run in the F.A. and Football League Cups. But we are keeping our fingers crossed that our time will come and our loyal supporters will deserve their just reward.

One comment on the Final, which I saw. Arsenal have built themselves up to strike quickly from defence and then close the game up just as quickly. When they went to Wembley they found they did not have strong pressure on them from Swindon and so left themselves open on occasions at the back.

This has happened to Gillingham this term. We are better when we are breaking, but in the game against Barnsley, which I thought was a good example, we had so much of the attacking play and so many people in the Barnsley half that we then lacked the composure to get the ball in the back of the net.

Someone was needed to steady the game down and I feel that this was the reason why Arsenal failed against Swindon.

No 40
H.T. 1-1
attend: 5,961

Gills flounder in off-side trap

GILLINGHAM extended their unbeaten run to five matches at Priestfield Stadium on Friday night but at the same time dropped a valuable home point in their anti-relegation battle.

Earlier in the week manager Basil Hayward had said it was vital that Gillingham picked up maximum points from home matches but after a bright start that produced a sixth minute lead goal from skipper Gordon Riddick the Gills frittered away some golden chances that would have made the game safe long before the final whistle.

With the exception of a 10-minute spell in the first half this was mainly Gillingham's game. Attacks were built up with accuracy from midfield maestro Terry Simpson, and with schemer Andy Smillie showing up more than of late, the Barnsley defenders were fully extended.

EFFECTIVE

But the Yorkshire club played an effective off-side trap that often baffled the twin striking spearhead of Carl Gilbert and Gordon Riddick, but not to the extent that chances were at a premium.

Although Gilbert and Riddick both troubled the compact Barnsley defence the game only emphasized that Gillingham are sadly missing the shooting boots of Brian Yeo in the penalty box. The nippy striker would almost certainly have cashed in on some of the chances that were set up by his colleagues.

At the back Gillingham were tight but Barnsley, who broke sharply with two lively wingers in Bob Earnshaw and George Hamstead, and an ever-dangerous leader in Eddie Loydon, always looked threatening.

Gillingham slipped into top gear right from the kick-off and after Gilbert had headed over the bar Barnsley were rocked back on their heels by a sixth minute goal from a move that split the Yorkshire defence.

John Meredith won the ball on the left wing moved forward a few yards and sent a cross to the far corner of the penalty box. Gilbert raced in to meet the ball and saw 'keeper Ironside brilliantly palm away his downward header, but only to the feet of the onrushing **RIDDICK** who side-footed it home.

The match could not have got off to a better start for home fans but inexplicably the Gills then suffered a spell of complacency that allowed Barnsley to come back and level in the 18th minute.

After Loyden had missed a good chance from Robson's cross the centre-forward made no mistake a minute later. A long through ball saw **LOYDEN** beat two defenders to the ball and he slipped it past the advancing Simpson.

Four minutes later the Gillingham defence found itself in a rare tangle. Earnshaw waltzed round Green, saw his cross headed down into the packed box by Williams and Quirke hooked the ball clear from the challenging Loyden.

As quickly as Gillingham lapsed into lethargic football so minute to monopolize the remainder of the half's attacking play.

Meredith's corner flashed across the goalmouth with no-one on hand to tap the ball home and then Woodley carved himself space in midfield by beating two defenders only for Gilbert to be pulled up for off-side.

Right-back Laurie Murphy

Gillingham 1, Barnsley 1

was only too pleased to clear a Woodley cross to safety and then Murphy found himself under pressure and his pass back to Ironside was well wide.

In a rare Barnsley raid Simpson flung himself at Earnshaw's feet but almost immediately play was again centred in the visitors' penalty area as Riddick raced through from the half-way line, found Woodley with a gem of a pass and the winger's inside pass was crashed over the bar by Terry Simpson.

In the 42nd minute Simpson came to Gillingham's rescue. Hamstead sent over what appeared to be a harmless cross but Loyden rose high to nod towards the corner of the net only to see Simpson twist himself and pull the ball down.

A minute before the break it was Barnsley's turn for a narrow escape. Terry Simpson raced hard into the box and from the narrowest of angles slammed the ball against the upright.

Loyden, Barnsley's most dangerous forward, continued to be a persistent menace to the Gills' defence and had two chances early in the second half to put the visitors in front.

Almost from the restart Bettany, who sparked off a number of raids, pushed the ball through the Gills' back row to Loyden, standing with his back to the goal. The striker swung round and somehow connected with the ball and Simpson had to dive to his right to save.

Shortly after, a similar move found Loyden clear again, but his shot was blocked at point-blank range by Simpson who had advanced quickly off his line.

The match continued to be end-to-end stuff, but Gillingham were labouring in attack as Barnsley's use of the offside trap proved far too sharp for them.

A brilliant run by Woodley, beginning at about the half-way line, brought the winger within ten yards of the goal. But just when the defence was bracing itself for a shot he chipped across the goalmouth for Riddick to head neatly home — but from an off-side position.

Full-back Mike Green showed the way to break the trap with a long run down the left wing which ended with a snap header from Riddick to bring the save of the evening from Ironside.

For the last quarter it was all Gillingham.

FLOUNDERED

Carl Gilbert went close with three half-chances, the first when he continued the challenge after Riddick floundered on the edge of the area, and lifted the ball cleverly over Ironside's head only to see it bounce inches wide.

In Gillingham's next attack he just failed to get a boot to the ball after Ironside had blocked a full-blooded drive from Terry Simpson. Later he put the ball just over the bar from a cross by Woodley.

Gillingham might have scored the winner from any of these, or from any one of a dozen others — when Green fired inches wide after a back pass from Riddick, when Riddick was narrowly foiled by Ironside and Booth, or when the Gills' skipper, sandwiched by two defenders, put in a shot which scraped the bar.

In the end it all came down to finishing — something Gillingham could not provide against Barnsley's effective off-side trap and the visitors' speed in dropping back to cover.

Gillingham: Simpson (J.); Weston, Green; Simpson (T.), Williams, Quirke; Woodley, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.

Barnsley: Ironside; Murphy, Booth; Bettany, Raggett, Howard; Earnshaw, Evans, Loyden, Robson, Hamstead, Sub: Bradbury.

Attendance: 5,961.

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Watford	34	20	9	5	56	20	49
Swindon	34	20	7	7	53	27	47
Luton	33	18	6	9	50	30	42
Plymouth	36	16	9	11	42	36	41
Bournemouth	33	17	6	10	52	31	40
Torquay	34	15	7	12	43	33	37
Stockport	33	13	11	9	55	48	37
Brighton	38	13	10	15	58	54	36
Northampton	35	13	10	12	42	40	36
Tranmere	35	15	6	14	49	52	36
Walsall	35	12	11	12	38	34	35
Rotherham	35	12	10	13	43	41	34
Reading	34	12	9	13	54	51	33
Barnsley	33	11	10	12	43	48	32
Orient	33	10	11	12	39	45	31
Bristol R.	33	11	8	14	47	52	30
Barrow	32	12	6	14	42	53	30
Southport	31	11	6	14	48	51	28
GILLINGHAM	34	9	10	15	43	54	28
Crewe	33	11	6	16	41	54	28
Mansfield	30	9	9	12	37	38	27
Oldham	36	9	7	20	35	64	25
Hartlepool	34	6	13	15	29	64	25
Shewsbury	32	8	7	17	27	46	23

FOLLOW THE GILLS

GILLINGHAM F.C. Supporters' Association have made travel arrangements for tomorrow's (Saturday) League match at Luton.

Booking can be made at the Gordon Road office today (Friday) between 10-30 a.m. and 2 p.m., and from 7-30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The office will also be open tomorrow from 9-10 a.m.

Cheap Day return rail fare is 22 shillings and British Rail recommend the following trains: Depart Gillingham 11-17 a.m.; Chatham 11-20 a.m.; St. Pancras 1-10 p.m. Arrive Luton 2-05 p.m.

Riddick strikes

GILLINGHAM fans could not have wished for a better start to Friday night's clash with Barnsley at Priestfield Stadium.

A sixth minute lead goal from skipper Gordon Riddick shocked the Yorkshire club and the build up was captured by Chatham Standard photographer, Bernard Steele.

Left, Carl Gilbert meets John Meredith's hard cross to send a downward header towards the net. Right, goalkeeper Ironside brilliantly dives across his goal to palm the ball away — below, Riddick moves in sharply to add the finishing touch. R.1107, R.1108, R.1109.

Riddick is not for sale

GILLINGHAM have turned down an offer from Swindon for skipper Gordon Riddick. Manager Basil Hayward would not disclose the fee offered, but described it as "reasonable."

"I refused Swindon's bid because I want to build a side and not destroy our team by selling players" said Mr. Hayward.

"I now hope the fans will rally round us during our forthcoming crucial matches so that we can avoid the drop" he added.

Mr. Hayward is keeping his fingers crossed that both Brian Yeo and Mel Machin will recover from injury in time for Wednesday's game at Priestfield Stadium against Crewe.

"Neither are fit at the moment, but I should know something by tomorrow morning," he added.

A Barnsley attack is cleared by Gillingham pivot Bill Williams, while team-mate Tony Weston watches the action. R.1145

Two more weeks to vote

GILLINGHAM Supporters' Association are holding a presentation and social night at Kent Alloys Canteen on Saturday April 12 when the association's Player of the Year award will be presented.

Closing date for nominations for the award is on Monday, April 7, at Gillingham's Third Division match at Priestfield Stadium against Barrow.

In addition to the presentation at the Kent Alloys Canteen, the draw for the Building Fund will be made. To date 8,000 tickets have been sold.

Mark Agate, the Association's Press officer, made an appeal today for more agents for the daily draw scheme. Anyone interested should ring Medway 50398 or call in at the Association's office at the Gordon Road entrance at Priestfield Stadium.

JOE O'NEILL has resigned from the Gillingham Supporters Association committee after four years. His place has been taken by Alex Bristow, who together with press officer Mark Agate, attended Sunday's meeting of the National Federation of Football Supporters' Club (Sou... area) at Wimbledon F...

Riddick move mystery

DANNY WILLIAMS, the Swindon boss. "No bid yet."

CONFUSION today surrounded Swindon's interest in popular Gillingham captain Gordon Riddick, with both clubs apparently waiting for the other to make the next move, writes JOHN WINTER.

Danny Williams, manager of the Wiltshire club who has been watching Riddick for some time and travelled to Hartlepool to see him in action on Monday, said today: "I have asked Basil Hayward if the player is available and now it rests with the club chairman. There has been no bid."

At Priestfield Stadium Mr. Haward, the Gillingham manager, also said there had been no bids. He thought possibly his opposite number in Swindon would contact him later in the day.

Meanwhile a national newspaper said this morning that Danny Williams was waiting for an answer from Gillingham after making a £12,000 bid.

Riddick, 25, is the scorer of nine goals this season. He joined Gillingham from Luton Town two seasons ago as a wing-half, but has since been converted into a striker. He has made 94 appearances for the club and played a major part in the Gills' 2—0 home win over Swindon last week.

Following last night's heavy rain the Priestfield pitch was very wet this morning but there was no immediate concern for tomorrow night's match against Barnsley. More worrying was the League position.

Although Gillingham have hit their target of a point a game during the past two months in their bid to reach a "safe" total of 40 points, they cannot determine their future alone—their fellow strugglers will also have a big say in the matter.

● **LATE FLASH.** Brian Yeo has a chance of playing against Barnsley. He will report before the game when a decision will be made on his fitness.

'Ridiculous' to call off Crewe game

THE news that Crewe Alexandra, another of the ever-increasing list of clubs to be hit by flu, have been given permission to postpone their Third Division match against Gillingham at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow was described by Gills' boss Basil Hayward today as "Ridiculous," writes DAVE WILKES.

"But what can you do? The Football League have made their decision and the matter ends there. You just have to accept it," an annoyed Mr. Hayward added.

Crewe asked the League yesterday if they could call the match off because 10 of their first team squad had gone down with flu. Crewe are also due to meet Bristol Rovers on Friday and at the moment the game is still on.

"All the time I've been in football up until this season I don't think I've ever heard of matches being called off because of illness," said Mr. Hayward. "I understood that whatever the circumstances a club must field a team."

He said that it appeared that injuries to players were put in another category. "I've had three of my first team players out injured for the best part of two months but I've had to field a side without them," he said.

Gillingham would have had an excellent chance to extend their unbeaten run to six games against their fellow strugglers who are also hoping to avoid the drip to Division Fur.

Basil said that he thought his side would have been capable of both points, which would have moved the Gills two points clear of the Cheshire club.

Recover

The match has now been rearranged for next Wednesday.

Postponement of the game tomorrow at least gives Brian Yeo and Mel Machin more time to recover from injury.

"Yeo is making better progress than Machin. If they are fit they will definitely be considered for the Luton trip on Saturday but even then it is not certain ; will play," said Mr. Hayward.

He gives Carl Gilbert and Dave Quirke, who both played in the first team team against Barnsley last Friday, a run-out in the reserves travelling to Ipswich tonight for a Football Combination fixture (7.30).

Team: Belotti, Ribbins, Simmons, Bailey, Arnott, Quirke, Osborn, Harrison, Gilbert, Peach, Folds.

Chances of the reserves' match being played were rated "very unlikely" by an Ipswich source this morning. The pitch is saturated.

● Another match became a casualty of the flu epidemic when Blackburn Rovers' second division fixture against Middlesbrough tomorrow was called off today.

Personal touch can smooth soccer rowdies

HOOLIGANISM among football supporters is not often experienced in Gillingham, but nevertheless, it is a problem that is very noticeable in many parts of the country and could rear its ugly face at any ground.

It was with straight faces then that the National Association of Football Supporters' Clubs discussed crowd temperament and control at their recent conference, which was attended by Mark Agate, Press Officer of the Gillingham Football Supporters' Association.

What causes the trouble? Over-enthusiastic patriotism, mass hysteria, or just sheer destructive streaks?

"It's something you can't tie down, because every club has their own problems," said Mark.

"I think it is a fringe element who don't go along to watch the football, just to cause trouble.

"We discussed what control we had over our members, but I can't see how one can identify them in a melee to take action.

"I would like to see the crowd more occupied on the terraces. Give them something to read or ground facilities to look at like our supporters' shop. Personally I think our club has one of the best crowds in the country, although one or two of them at the Rainham end sometimes get carried away."

Should there be more police supervision? Turning for a moment to cricket there was an example worth nothing in the Pakistan MCC series, when for the second Test, police did not enter the ground and students supervised the crowd with remarkable success.

The fourth test, with police hovering about had to be abandoned.

Welcome

A different temperament out there maybe, but what about more club stewards, including girls, at our football matches? A more personal approach to controlling fans might be worth considering.

Harold France, chairman of the Blue and Whites Supporters' Association, thinks that clubs might take a leaf out of the Q.P.R. book.

"I remember a particular day when Q.P.R. were in the Third Division and visited us," he said. "The Q.P.R. fans gave the visitors a noisy welcome as they inspected the pitch and what really stuck in my mind was the action of Alec Stock (then the manager) and Jim Langley (then the captain) who walked round the perimeter and mingled with their supporters for a few minutes.

It struck me that this was really in the best interests of public relations, and there was certainly no incident as I can recall at that game or since then."

Mr. France added that many of the troublemakers did not attend as spectators, but merely to cause trouble. "Fortunately at Gillingham we are blessed with a fairly small sprinkling of these people, and our support is generally well behaved."

So there's a few ideas — more things to keep the fans occupied on the terraces, more liaison between clubs and fans, and more stewards to calm things down. If you have any ideas, I'd be pleased to hear them.

Yeo may return for Gills but....

CONFIDENT LUTON LOOK FOR A HAT-TRICK

GILLINGHAM'S chance of improving their league table position by picking up both points against Crewe this week disappeared when the Cheshire Club successfully applied to the Football League to have Wednesday's match at Priestfield Stadium postponed, because several of their players had been laid low by 'flu.

This match has now been rearranged for next Wednesday evening, kick-off 7.30 p.m., but before then the Gills have a tough match on the heavy Luton Town ground tomorrow (Saturday).

It will be the clubs third meeting of the season and Gillingham will be out to prevent Alex Stock's title-chasers from completing a hat-trick of victories. Luton visited the Stadium in August to pull off a 3-1 league win and sent the Gills out of the F. A. Cup in December by a similar score at the Kenilworth Road ground.

Mr. Hayward travelled to Kenilworth Road on Wednesday to see Luton improve the promotion drive with a 3-0 victory over Bristol Rovers.

News from the Stadium yesterday (Thursday) was that it was likely that leading goalscorer Brian Yeo will be fit to make the trip to Luton. However, his inclusion in the side will depend on the condition of the pitch.

Gillingham, unbeaten in their last five league outings, will select their line-up from the following 13: John Simpson; Tony Weston, Mike Green, Terry Simpson, Bill Williams, David Quirke, Derek Woodley, Gordon Riddick, Carl Gilbert, Brian Yeo, Andy Smillie, John Meredith and Ray Bailey.

Making a recovery from injury is polished wing half Mel Machin, who has been out of the game in recent weeks with knee trouble. "He is coming along slowly," said manager Basil Hayward this week.

Commenting on the Luton visit the Gills' boss said: "Luton still think they have a chance of going up to Division Two. There is no doubt about it, it is going to be a tough match for us."

One thing is certain, Gillingham cannot afford their continued generosity of squandered chances as was seen against Barnsley on Friday night. Every point is now vital for the club in their anti-relegation battle.

But despite the club's lowly position players continue to attract attention. Swindon put in a "considerable offer" for skipper Gordon Riddick last week-end which was turned down.

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward said yesterday (Thursday) that Johnny Haynes would probably be in the Fulham team to meet Gills Reserves at Priestfield Stadium in a Football Combination fixture tomorrow.

The appearance of the former England international provides an extra boost for Gills' fans. Fulham already head the Combination table.

NO INJURIES

Mr. Harry Haslam, ex-manager of Tunbridge, who is now assisting Alex Stock at Luton, told the Chatham News yesterday that the team which won on Wednesday had sustained no injuries and there would probably be no change against Gillingham.

It is: Davie, Dougan, Bannister, Slough, Branston, Moore, French, Allen, Sheffield, Lewis, Rioch, Keen.

The pitch, said Mr. Haslam, is drying out gradually but is bound to be a little bit heavy.

After their win on Wednesday which put them only three points behind the leaders, Mr Haslam said Luton were confident of beating Gills for the third time this season.

Tuesday's Football Combination fixture at Ipswich was postponed because of a waterlogged ground.

Swindon offer is turned down

GILLINGHAM turned down at the week-end what manager Basil Hayward described as a "considerable offer" from Swindon Town for skipper and striker, Gordon Riddick.

Swindon have made no secret that they have been interested in the former Luton player, who has notched double figures for the club this season, for some time. In the Barnsley match on Friday evening Riddick was also watched by Charlton boss, Eddie Firmani.

But, as he has often said in the past, Mr. Hayward is interested in making Gillingham a leading club and yesterday (Monday) he said: "Main reason for turning down the offer is that we want to resist selling the best players and concentrate on making Gillingham a top club.

"We have got to get points to remove ourselves from our present position in the league table. We won't do this by selling our players — we also want to do something ourselves," he said.

Crewe, surprisingly beaten 1-0 at home by bottom club Shrewsbury on Friday night, have the same number of points as Gillingham but a slightly inferior goal average.

Gillingham's home match with Crewe Alexandra tomorrow was called off late yesterday afternoon (Monday) after Crewe manager Ernie Tagg had sent home at least eight players who were suffering from 'flu.

Mr. Tagg applied to the Football League yesterday to have the match postponed.

This postponement is obviously a great disappointment to Gillingham. A win tomorrow against Crewe — the clubs are level on points but Gills have a slightly better goal average — would have improved the Stadium club's position and put the team in good heart for Saturday's visit to high-riding Luton, who have twice defeated Gills 3-1 this season, once in the League and again in the F.A. Cup.

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Millwall	25	21	3	1	108	29	45
Ipswich T.	21	16	5	0	68	19	37
Orient	21	15	6	0	63	26	36
Charlton	23	14	5	4	58	28	33
Q.P.R	23	13	4	6	55	33	30
Crystal P.	24	13	1	10	57	53	27
Tottenham	25	12	2	11	72	37	26
Chelsea	25	8	7	10	41	54	23
Luton T.	24	7	7	10	46	54	21
West Ham	22	9	2	11	58	47	20
Watford	21	7	3	11	29	39	17
Fulham	24	7	3	14	34	69	17
Reading	25	6	5	14	37	82	17
Colchester	25	7	3	15	34	85	17
Brighton	25	5	4	16	38	64	14
GILLINGHAM	20	4	1	15	21	43	9
Oxford U.	21	1	3	17	23	70	5

GOALKEEPER John Simpson, one of the most popular players ever to turn out for the Gills, chalked up his 500th senior appearance for the club on Friday night. Before the game he received a suitably inscribed lighter from Blue-and-Whites' Association chairman Harold France to mark his achievement (above). Then it was out to face the eager Barnsley attack, who gave him plenty of opportunities to prove his ability. Our other picture shows John in typical action punching clear

SUPPORTERS DISCUSS HOOLIGANISM

MR. J. T. "Joe" O'Neill has tendered his resignation from the executive committee of the Gillingham Supporters' Association owing to business commitments and has been replaced as co-delegate to the National Federation of Football Supporters' Club meetings by Mr. Alex Bristow.

Mr. Bristow and Mr. Mark Agate attended an Area meeting at Wimbledon last Sunday and took part in discussions ranging from rail travel to dances, and from hooliganism to the role supporting bodies should play in present day football.

The Federation is officially recognized by the Football Association as representing football fans in this country and National Chairman Mr. Archie Gooch addressed the delegates, who represented a majority of the Football League clubs in the south and a few Southern League clubs.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

TORQUAY FIXTURE AN EXPERIMENT

THE question was asked at Tuesday's annual meeting of the Supporters' Association why Gillingham do not follow Southend's idea and play matches on Friday evening.

It was pointed out that Southend regularly had a five-figure gate, but while I agree that evening matches are an attraction I personally would prefer to see the Saturday match remain at Gillingham — but possibly with an evening kick-off.

Midweek matches as an extra fixture are very good for a small club like Gillingham but there are a certain number of clubs who do not wish to play on Friday or Saturday evenings and their wishes must be agreed with.

In the future we might possibly see a re-organization of the sporting week-end. Sunday football has been talked about but at the moment Saturday is still the people's sports day.

Saturday evening football has been referred to at Gillingham and this month we have an evening kick-off against Torquay. This was one of several fixtures made by the club during the closed season and will be used as an experiment.

FIGHTING HARD

Our performances against Orient and Hartlepool to come away with a point from each match is, I feel, an indication that the players are fighting hard to pull the club away from the danger zone.

On both occasions the boys found themselves a goal in arrears, and at Hartlepool it was very early in the game. But after a none too happy start the team got stronger and in the end we might well have come away with both points.

An unfortunate aspect of Monday's match was that we had two players booked — John Meredith and Carl Gilbert. But in both cases I feel that the "booking" was rather harsh.

Now we are faced with two home matches, — Barnsley tonight and Crewe on Wednesday. — and maximum points must be obtained. If we can do this we can buckle down for the remainder of our programme, and try to take both points from home matches and what we can from away visits.

The position at the foot of the table is getting uncomfortable. Anyone who strikes a bad patch at this vital stage of the season could find it very costly— this is something we must avoid.

We certainly cannot afford to allow any complacency to creep into our play — and this has happened this season. We have got to keep on our toes and work hard.

Finally, I would like to again refer to Tuesday's poorly attended Supporters' Association meeting. For me the most pleasing aspect was the real interest and enthusiasm for the club shown by those people who attended.

Barnsley goalkeeper Ironside leaps forward to clear the ball from the head of Gillingham's Gordon Riddick on Friday. R.1110

Reserves outshone the stars

Possibly for the first time ever, three former England players took part in a match at Gillingham on Saturday. Left to right, Johnny Haynes, former England captain, leaves Bobby Folds grounded (centre), Johnny Byrne looks for a chance, and (right) George Cohen. R.1278-R.1278

Danger Zone

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps.
Bristol Rvrs.	35	10	12	13	48	55	32
Barrow ..	34	12	7	15	43	57	31
Gillingham .	35	9	11	15	44	55	29
Crewe	34	11	6	17	41	55	28
Hartlepool .	36	7	14	15	32	65	28
Mansfield ..	31	9	9	13	38	40	27
Oldham ..	37	9	7	21	36	67	25
Shrewsbury .	34	9	7	18	30	51	25

Basil's new plan paid off

A PLEASED Basil Hayward was full of praise for his side this morning. Gillingham operated a change of style so well that they almost beat promotion-seeking Luton Town.

Said the Gillingham manager, "We gave ourselves the advantage by playing Smillie and Yeo up front to trouble the big lads with their sharpness, while Riddick and Bailey came into the spaces from the rear. The whole side played well and I was happy with the way Brian Yeo's leg responded."

It was Yeo's first game since a recurrence of a pulled muscle injury on March 1.

Gillingham have done well to maintain their point a game average of the past few weeks and Mr. Hayward remains confident that they will escape relegation.

"I always thought we would," he said, "but it's going to be a stiff fight. The teams at the bottom are all helping one another and our most crucial games now must be against those teams," he said.

Gillingham face fellow-strugglers Crewe in a re-arranged home match on Wednesday when, with the exception of Mel Machin, there should be no injury problem.

The Blue and Whites Association came to Gillingham's rescue after the match on Saturday, when the team coach broke down. Officials and players were given a lift home much to the delight of the younger supporters, who spent most of the journey building up autograph collections.

Full of hope for Crewe game

AFTER picking up a well-earned point from promotion candidates Luton on Saturday, Gillingham must be more than confident of pulling right away from the Third Division relegation zone in beating Crewe at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow (Wednesday) evening.

For Gillingham were only the second side this season to come away from Kenilworth Road with a point, and after the match, manager Basil Hayward was full of praise for his team.

"They all played well," he said, "and we were only justified in getting a point."

For tomorrow's match Gillingham's squad will be the same as on Saturday, with Derek Woodley probably coming back to replace Ray Bailey.

The team will probably be: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.

A win against Crewe would put Gillingham — unbeaten in their last six matches — three points above their opponents, although Crewe have a game in hand.

Crewe, who plunged deeper in trouble when they lost 1-0 at Bristol Rovers on Friday evening, suffered a few slight injuries and will choose from: Mailey, Lowrey, Leigh, Stott, Foster, Gater, Curley, McHale, Hollett, Inglis, Tarbuck, Ratcliffe, and Gammon.

No41
H.T: 0-1
attend: 14,562

UNLUCKY GILLS ROBBED BY LATE GOAL

Luton 1, Gillingham 1.

AGAINST the odds, the forecasts, and with the added set-back of playing against 12 men, Gillingham pulled off one of their biggest successes of the season and took a point from promotion-chasers Luton on Saturday.

The twelfth man with whom they battled was referee, Mr. D. H. Counsell (Somerset), who gave some diabolical decisions — nearly all in favour of the home side — and virtually ruined what might have been a good game.

Instead, he turned it into a match of non-stop whistle-blowing as Luton, and in particular striker Brian Lewis, tried hard to perfect the art of falling over when ever possibe.

It was a ridiculous situation, for if Luton had been content to play their normal game they would surely have run Gillingham into the ground.

CHEEKY

In footballing ability and possession of play, Luton could have and should have won easily. But Gillingham got doggedly on with the game played clean, if unimaginative, football and were only fairly rewarded with their point.

Indeed Luton's face-saving goal seven minutes from time can be partly attributed to a great piece of cheek on the part of the club.

After 81 minutes, with Gillingham just managing to hold onto their 1-0 lead, it was announced Swindon, one of Luton's promotion rivals, were losing at Plymouth.

Immediately Luton, who had begun to look lost and dejected, were spurred to a greater effort, tackling faster and harder, and crowd to scream even louder.

Two minutes later after continuous pressure on the visitors' goal SHEFFIELD managed to push the ball home through a crowded goalmouth.

2

Other than this Luton produced few goalworthy efforts, and it was ridiculous to think there were 16 places between the clubs.

Gillingham obviously went with the intention of taking a point, as their flying winger, Derek Woodley, was dropped for Ray Bailey, who played a purely defensive role.

Not to be put off by Luton's hustling tactiis as they went in search of an early goal, Gillingham settled down to produce some good moves, notably one between Simpson and Yeo which ended when Yeo's return pass was well intercepted by Bannister.

With the crowd shouting every time Luton began an attacking move, and screaming whenever a Gillingham player dared put in any sort of tackle, Luton won themselves a number of unwarranted free kicks and began to take advantage of three weak officials.

CLOSE CALL

Despite their persistence with the "dying swan" act, Luton also found time for some football and Bruce Rioch went close to giving them the lead.

Rioch, who virtually ruled mid-field broke through the middle and as he approached the goal a yawning gap opened before him. He shot first time by Gills' 'keeper John Simpson dived to his left to save well.

After 26 minutes Terry Simpson, who tried hard in this half to get the Gillingham forwards moving, set up a good move for Riddick, but the Gills' skipper, instead of galloping into the gap that Simpson had brilliantly manoeuvred for him, passed wide to Smillie and the chance was gone.

Although it was Luton who were piling on the pressure, Gillingham went closest to scoring when the home defence failed to clear a Bill Williams free kick into the area. Brian Yeo turned on the spot, only feet from the line, but shot weakly and Davie saved.

After 32 minutes came Mr. Counsell's biggest refereeing mistake.

After the ball was cleared from the Luton area, Riddick was fouled in the box by Moore, and the referee blew. He had a few harsh words with Moore and although he really had no alternative but to give a penalty he instead gave a bounce-up near the half-way line.

A minute before the break Gillingham showed the way the game should be played and open the scoring.

Winger John Meredith, one of Gillingham's outstanding workers who had a brilliant game, sent over a cross from the left. Andy Smillie, had his shot saved by Davie who palmed the ball out to the right. Terry Simpson was on hand to pull it back into the goalmouth where BRIAN YEO was allowed to push it home.

In the second period Gillingham, for some unapparent reason looked far more casual. Andy Smillie, who contributed little throughout, was joined by Terry Simpson who seemed to take little interest in the rest of the proceedings.

Rioch continued to make trouble for the visitors and Williams was booked for a foul on him after Smillie had left Rioch free in the middle.

On individual moves Gillingham still looked the more dangerous and Smillie should have scored after Yeo lifted the ball into the middle. Instead he tried to dribble it round Davie, and the 'keeper snatched the ball off his foot.

From then on it was a case of a continuous rearguard action by Gillingham but they never looked like giving way until Sheffield's late equalizer.

Luton: Davie, Dougan, Bannister, Slough, Branston, Moore, French, Allen, Sheffield, Lewis, Rioch. Sub: Jardine.

Gillingham: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, T. Simpson, Williams, Quirke, Bailey, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Woodley.

Attendance: 14,562

Seventh from bottom!

GILLINGHAM 1, CREWE 0

DESPAIR and delight mix easily in football, and though last night's Priestfield game was overshadowed by serious injury to popular link-man Terry Simpson, home fans had a much-needed win and went home with cheers in their ears.

Gillingham extended their unbeaten run to seven games and took another giant step towards safety, while poor Crewe Alexandra sank deeper into trouble they look too good for.

The old firm — strikers Brian Yeo, Gordon Riddick and Derek Woodley — were back together for the first time for a month, producing crisp football. Their a billiards cannon on the green felt of the pitch.

Woodley lost a little steam after the interval, but while he was in flow the Crewe defence — already utilising two men to cover Yeo — were stretched to the full.

Yeo, of course, scored the winning goal, his 18th of the season, but there were other chances that went begging. More goals could have relaxed the crowd long before the final whistle — but who wants to be too relaxed at a football match?

Terry Simpson, as always, most consistent, left the field on a stretcher in

BY JOHN WINTER

the 28th minute after a collision in full stride with Crewe's Tommy Curley.

His legs were strapped and he was taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital with a double fracture of the right leg.

First shot of the match went to Crewe — a long drive which John Simpson

★

Some people still won't believe the Gills sometimes produce results other than 1-1 draws! Both ITV and BBC gave the score as 1-1 on last night's news bulletins.

They could almost be forgiven for the error — Gillingham's previous four matches had all ended that way.

★

dealt with with time to spare. John Meredith, who with David Quirke, deserves a special mention for stout-hearted running and tackling, almost found Yeo with a side-ruled pass that was kicked off his toe, and then the Gillingham centre-forward teed up Andy Smillie in the penalty area, only for him to be brought down.

There was some scrappy play, and one terrible series of mis-kicks in the Crewe penalty area had both sides appearing to try to out-do the other in making mistakes.

Just before Simpson went off, he set Riddick up with a accurate free-kick but both the striker and the goalkeeper missed the ball.

Both goalkeepers were kept busy and Bill Williams had his hands full with a former Mansfield clubmate Ivan Hollett.

You could feel a goal in the air as Gillingham forced three corners in quick succession, and Woodley hit the back of a post with a powerful shot on the run.

Sure enough it came, in the 39th minute — Smillie fed Riddick, who slipped the ball through for Yeo and though the Gillingham goal-ace appeared to lose his chance when Lowry gained possession, the full-back pushed in on and **Yeo**, following up, had only to slam it into the net.

Ray Bailey, the substitute, and Williams both had shots for Gillingham in the early stages of the second half, and at the other end Bradshaw and Ratcliffe skimmed the bar.

Crewe were let off the hook when Woodley caught the defence upfield and raced down the wing. He and Riddick had only one defender between them and the goal, but the winger's cross was far too long and Riddick had to turn round to get it which allowed the defence time to catch up.

Bailey, covering a lot of space, cracked a low drive inches wide, and then full-back Tony Weston ran onto a loose ball not far out and hit it so high the toe of his boot might have been moulded from an eight iron.

It was a good win and Crewe never really looked like salvaging a point, despite the menace of their inside-men.

Gillingham: J. Simpson; Weston, Green, T. Simpson (sub. Bailey), Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Riddick, Yeo, Smillie, Meredith.

Crewe: Mailey; Lowry, Leigh, Stott, Foster, Gater, Curley, McHale, Hollett, Tarbuck, Bradshaw. Sub. Ratcliffe.

Attendance: 5,072.

Third Div. placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Watford	35	20	9	6	58	24	49
Swindon	36	21	7	8	58	29	49
Luton	36	20	7	9	59	32	47
Plymouth	38	17	10	11	46	29	44
Bournemouth	36	17	6	13	52	35	40
Tranmere	38	16	8	14	54	56	40
Torquay	35	16	7	12	46	34	39
Stockport	35	14	11	10	59	52	39
Brighton	40	14	11	15	63	56	39
Northampton	37	14	10	13	45	43	38
Walsall	37	12	12	13	40	38	36
Rotherham	37	13	10	14	44	42	36
Reading	37	13	10	14	55	53	36
Orient	36	12	11	13	42	47	35
Southport	34	14	6	14	57	51	34
Bristol	35	13	8	15	54	57	34
Barnsley	35	11	10	14	43	51	32
Gillingham	36	10	11	15	45	55	31
Barrow	35	12	7	16	44	62	31
Crewe	35	11	6	18	41	56	28
Hartlepool	36	7	14	15	32	65	28
Mansfield	32	9	9	14	40	46	27
Oldham	38	10	7	21	38	67	27
Shrewsbury	34	9	7	18	26	61	25

You get that loving feeling when you've just scored ... Brian Yeo is embraced enthusiastically by captain Gordon Riddick after getting a two point goal for Gills. R. 1319.

THEY fly through the air ... Riddick and Yeo are up for a Woodley corner. Riddick beat the Crewe cover but was out of luck. Pictures by John Mellor.

WHO GETS SIMPSON'S JOB NOW?

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward summed up the full tragedy of Terry Simpson's broken leg to the club this morning: "I have ideas on how to fill the gap but his distribution was such an asset that we are bound to miss him.

"I hope someone else will be able to knuckle under to the job."

The club are now without both their regular wing-halves because Mel Machin has been out of action for several weeks with knee trouble. He is now making a good recovery, however, and should be back before many more games.

Simpson, former Walsall captain, has made 38 full appearances for Gillingham since joining the club last summer and scored four goals. Basil Hayward anticipates that he will be fit for the start of next season in August but a hospital spokesman said that breaks of this nature could take any time from eight weeks to six months to mend.

The aim

Gillingham rose to seventh from bottom, three points clear of the next club as a result of last night's good win.

But they are by no means out of trouble yet and must aim for at least a point from both their Easter away games against fellow strugglers Oldham Athletic and Mansfield Town, while doing well in their remaining home matches, starting with Torquay this Saturday night.

No 42
H.T. 1-0
attend: 5,072

OH! THAT FEELING

It's on the way . . . and Brian Yeo's goal gives Gills that vital boost away from the danger zone and the crowd something to cheer about. R. 1320

Terry Simpson out for rest of season

A PICTURE that will dismay Gillingham fans . . . Terry Simpson, broken leg in plaster, arrives for X-rays at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester.

TERRY SIMPSON, Gillingham's most experienced and versatile player, will not play any more this season.

He broke his right leg in two places during last night's vital game against Crewe Alexandra at Priestfield Stradium, and will be in plaster for four weeks.

This is a big blow to Gillingham, who in spite of last night's 1—0 victory are still threatened by relegation.

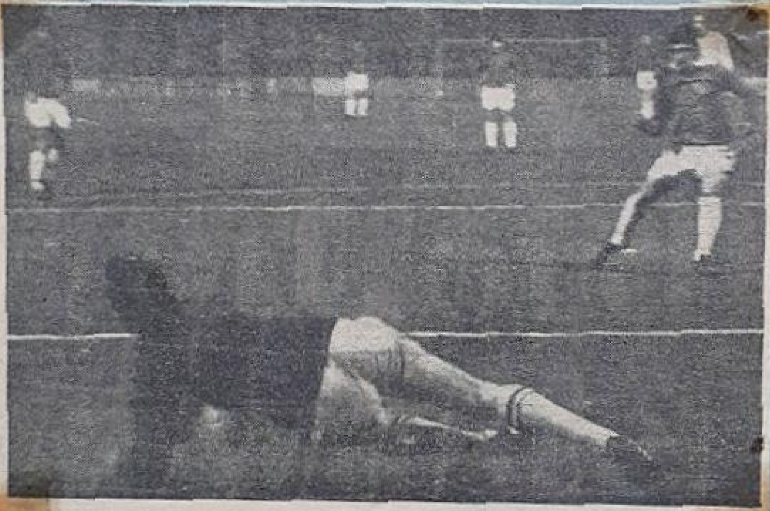
Simpson went home to Berengrave Lane, Rainham, after treatment at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester. This indicates that the injury is not complicated, but he is expected to be out of action until well into the summer.

The 29-year-old player was a little philosophical when he returned to the hospital for X-rays this morning.

"I felt pretty miserable last night," he said, "but now I realise that this is something that happens. The leg aches, but it's not as bad as the first half-hour last night."

OUT FOR MONTHS

Terry Simpson is carried off after breaking his leg during Wednesday's game against Crewe. For him the season ended last night right in the middle of Gills' crucial battle for Third Division survival. R. 1318.



THE miss of the match! Andy Donnelly, Torquay's goalkeeper, dives to hold **Brian** Yeo's spot-kick.

Gamesmanship I don't approve of

WEDNESDAY'S win against Crewe saw us come further away from the bottom of the table, and we are now hoping the worst of our troubles are over.

Considering the hard pitch and the swirling wind I thought it a reasonable game, if rather hard. Several of our players received knocks and bruises besides, of course, Terry Simpson, who was unlucky to break a leg.

Terry was an invaluable player to us, having the pace to launch quick breaks from defence and he had the great ability to play the ball at the right time. That is something we shall miss very much.

GOOD GAME

While on the subject of Wednesday's match I would like to say how pleased I was at the gate — over 5,000 — while some other Third Division clubs were down to 3,000, and in one case, 2,000.

I can only hope the gates will continue to improve until the end of the season.

While I think players should be able to ignore comments from the crowd, continuous barracking of one player can only make him worse. If it is persistent, it can end with him deciding to ask for a transfer, and the club losing a good player.

All players at Gillingham give off their best but their best can be a lot better with encouragement. As far as last Saturday's match with Luton is concerned, I was very pleased with the performance.

I know some members of the crowd could not understand the dropping of Derek Woodley for the first time this season, but as you can see the tactic worked, and on reflection I think we could have won.

I must admit I was slightly disappointed with the way one or two players continued to play it tight at the back in the second half and were content with a one-goal lead. In the end we had to make do with one point, though this is still more than most teams have managed at Luton this season.

I would also like to express my disapproval of the piece of gamesmanship on the part of the Bedfordshire club in broadcasting the score of the Plymouth-Swindon game.

The home crowd had already resigned themselves to the fact we were going to win until the announcement which stirred the crowd who in turn spurred on their team. Shortly afterwards Luton equalized.

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

Barnsley	34	11	10	14	43	51	32
GILLINGHAM	34	10	11	13	45	55	31
Barrow	35	12	7	16	44	62	31
Crewe	35	11	6	18	41	56	28
Hartlepool	36	7	14	15	32	63	28
Mansfield	32	9	9	14	40	48	27
Oldham	38	10	7	21	38	67	27
Shrewsbury	34	9	7	18	28	51	25

FANS IN NEED OF GREATER COMFORT?

GILLINGHAM'S match against Tranmere Rovers was attended by 4,800 people 12 days ago. Would the missing thousands—there are a quarter of a million people in the Medway Towns—come to the ground if more of the money raised by the supporters' organisations was spent on ground improvements?

This was the question posed at Tuesday's annual meeting of the Gillingham Supporters' Association, attended by about thirty people, at the Livingstone Arms, when part of the ground was described as "an eyesore."

But the man who said it, Mr. E. W. Filley, found himself alone, a single voice against the general opinion that the supporters' association should continue to give their contribution to the football club.

"We want some new thinking," said Mr. Filley. "You have got to think of your cash customer. Most of the money put in goes towards the players' wages, but it's up to the directors to pay them.

Nothing has been done for the cash customers for a long, long time, and the back of the Gordon Road stand is an eyesore."

Outlook

Mr. J. Pynn, a vice-president of the supporters' club, pointed out that this would be going full circle, as many years ago the club had not given their money to the club but spent it on the ground.

"It's no good having a brand new stand — a nice outlook for houses in Gordon Road — if we have not got a football club," he said.

Dr. C. S. Grossmark, chairman of the football club, said £70 had been spent on the stand three weeks ago. The club hoped to do more repairs themselves because they could not afford professional work.

The reason that the club relied so much on fund raising, said Mr. Basil Hayward, Gillingham manager, was because the crowds left a side if it was not in the first three as the early season got going, and it was goodbye to more when cup interest was over.

Possibly the most significant comment was that of a self-confesses "diehard" and season ticket holder, Mr. W. A. Waldridge. "I have a seat in the Gordon Road stand and it is the best position in the ground," he said.

"We don't mind a little light rain coming through the top a bit if we support the club. There is not enough people like us diehards who sell tickets week after week, year after year in the summer as well."

Friday evening soccer was not the answer to low gates, said Dr. Grossmark, in answer to a question, because "you must know the Football League frown on this. They do not want deviations because of pools income, and anyone who plays on a Friday faces a fine."

It was reported that the association donated £7,500 to the football club during the year, which was £1,700 down on the previous year.

A crowded Torquay goalmouth as Derek Woodley's left-wing corner floats across during the first half at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. R. 1368.

Yeo boobs with penalty and . . .

FRUSTRATING GILLS DROP A VITAL POINT

Gillingham 0, Torquay United 0

GILLINGHAM, it has been said time after time, have missed more than their fair share of golden goal-scoring chances...**writes MURRAY EVANS.**

But the sixth-minute penalty miss by Brian Yeo at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday must surely be the limit.

Gillingham's top scorer hit the ball so weakly and so easily within Donnelly's reach that the 'keeper, even though probably diving through instinct, had no trouble in saving the shot.

The spot-kick followed Gillingham's only sharp attacking move up to that time from which Derek Woodley won a corner. As the ball came over from the right, Torquay half-back Morgan was adjudged to push Gordon Riddick in the back and the referee had no hesitation in awarding the penalty.

Prior to this incident Gillingham had been unable to break out of their own half and though Torquay looked the more dangerous side Tony Weston, David Quirke and Bill Williams kept them in check with some crushing tackles.

The penalty miss, far from disheartening Gillingham, seemed to spur them on, but no other chance as good as that presented itself.

GLANCING HEADERS

Gordon Riddick and Brian Yeo worked well for each other, laying the ball off brilliantly with various flicks and glancing headers, but the bounce rarely went with them and they had to work hard for their chances.

Riddick and Yeo were well supported by Andy Smillie, having probably his best game of the season.

In defence and attack, on left and right, the little mid-field worker had a great game in working just behind the strikers or tackling back with the defence.

John Meredith played his usual game, relentlessly fetching and carrying down the left wing, setting up chances for the inside pair or helping Mike Green extinguish any right-wing Torquay attack.

Gillingham's back four all kept a tight hold on the visitors' front row, particularly Williams and Quirke who blocked Stubbs and Kitchener almost completely out of the match.

One could not help but feel sorry for Ray Bailey — brought in because of Terry Simpson's injury on Wednesday — who found no favour with the crowd.

After playing well up to standard for the first quarter he made one or two silly slips and was, from then on, treated to derisory jeers whenever he touched the ball and in the end rarely put a foot right.

He did, however, go closest to opening the scoring in the first half — except for the penalty — when he chased a long lob up the middle from Andy Smillie.

Bailey did well to outrun the retreating defence, lob the ball cleverly over the head of the advancing Donnelly but the ball bounced on the bar and over.

A typical example of Gillingham's ability to split the Torquay defence with smart, slick moves came shortly after, following a long ball upfield from Mike Green.

Smillie glanced the ball on with his head to Yeo who returned it as Smillie dashed through a square defence. A flashing pass out to the left wing found Meredith who crossed to the centre where Yeo headed past a well-beaten Donnelly, only for Baxter to clear off the line.

The Torquay 'keeper was kept on his toes the whole match while John Simpson was an on-looker for much of the time.

On the few occasions when the visitors did penetrate the home defence, usually with crosses from the wings, Simpson proved to be in fine form.

Torquay's best chance came shortly before the break when, from a Baxter cross, Stubbs rounded a flat-footed Mike Green but angled his final shot too much and the ball just missed the far post.

In the second half Gillingham played much as before, producing some delightful attacking moves in which Andy Smillie really shone.

Riddick almost gave them a deserved lead after a move started with some unusually delicate footwork from Bill Williams. The tall pivot pushed the ball forward to Brian Yeo who crossed to Derek Woodley via Smillie.

The move was so quickly executed that the Torquay defence was caught completely unawares and Riddick scraped the left hand post as he headed Woodley's cross past Donnelly.

PRESSURE

Gillingham, making every effort to impress the larger than usual crowd, seemed to win nearly every 50-50 ball and continued to pile on the pressure.

The Torquay defence was panicking, conceding corners in gay abandon, and failing to clear the ball from their own goalmouth, but Gillingham were just a fraction too slow to cash in.

A good ball from Quirke, as the whole Torquay back row retreated, found Gordon Riddick who withstood a challenge from either side only to lob his shot over the bar.

Torquay might have stolen both points in a sudden break. Rudge made a good run down the left and put in a cross which went over John Simpson but Barnes headed wide.

After all their efforts to keep Gillingham out Torquay almost gave them the points when Benson shot wildly across his own goalmouth. From about 12 yards out Riddick, flanked by two defenders, needed only to head the ball over Donnelly, who was way out of position, but the ball glanced off his head and was cleared.

An evening of frustration then for the Gillingham fans. Gills produced some really clever, flashy attacking moves to belie their position in the league table, but manager Basil Hayward would be the first to agree that flashy football is not the order of the day when division status is at stake.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Bailey, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Riddick, Yeo, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Gilbert.

Torquay: Donnelly, Benson, Baxter, Dunne, Young, Morgan, Cave, Stubbs, Kitchener, Rudge, Barnes. Sub: Scott.

Attendance: 6,236.

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	36	21	9	6	59	24	51
Swindon	37	21	7	9	56	30	49
Luton Tn.	37	21	7	9	61	33	49
Plymouth	39	17	11	11	47	40	45
Bournemouth	37	18	6	13	55	37	42
Tranmere	39	16	9	14	56	58	41
Torquay	36	16	8	12	46	34	40
Stockport	36	14	12	10	60	53	40
Brighton	41	14	12	15	64	57	40
Northampton	38	14	10	14	47	46	38
Walsall	38	12	13	13	42	40	37
Rotherham	38	13	11	14	45	43	37
Reading	38	13	11	14	57	55	37
Southport	35	14	7	14	57	51	35
Orient	37	12	11	14	43	49	35
Bristol R.	37	13	8	16	54	58	34
Barnsley	36	11	11	14	45	53	33
GILLINGHAM	37	10	12	15	45	55	32
Barrow	36	12	8	16	44	62	32
Hartlepool	37	8	14	15	33	65	30
Crewe	36	11	7	18	42	57	29
Mansfield	33	9	10	14	42	48	28
Oldham	39	10	8	21	40	69	28
Shrewsbury	35	9	8	18	29	52	26

No 43
H.T. 0-0
attend: 6,236

SANDWICHED: Brian Yeo flicks a header wide of an upright as he forces a way through packed Crewe defenders.

TOGETHERNESS . . . Gordon Riddick gets up a few inches higher than Benson, the Torquay right-back, to this first half corner.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

Saturday night gate encouraging but...

I was disappointed that we were unable to take both points from Torquay on Saturday but at the same time I was encouraged by the larger-than-usual gate which was nearly double that of some Third Division clubs who played the same evening.

I have said in the past that I would be in favour of Saturday night football but I was most surprized to learn that the Football League might frown on Friday and Saturday night football, which might disappear next season.

Not everyone can get to a Saturday afternoon game. In the Medway Towns we have a tremendous junior soccer following and an evening fixture does provide those people with a Football League match to watch.

There are many enthusiastic people who work hard for the junior clubs. They organize matches, run round to look after their clubs' interests and an evening League match does provide them with a break from their hurly-burly club life.

WORKING TIME

This suggestion has been brought about because of pressure from the Pools Promoters, who have had to re-adjust their working time to cope with Saturday evening football.

But quite honestly I think the decision should remain with the clubs. They should have the right to say yes or no — remember it is their future which is at stake, particularly the smaller clubs.

If evening football does disappear I feel it will be a great shame for the smaller clubs who already experience great difficulty. As far as I am concerned, the top clubs could kick-off at midnight and still play before packed houses.

The Football League gets a large amount of revenue for distribution amongst the 92 clubs from the Pools. But my own view is that it is wrong for the Pools people to try and influence our game. Any outside organization should fall in line with the game.

There are a tremendous number of people involved in football and often their tasks are thankless. Perhaps it might be wiser if these people came first and not the Pools organizers.

Supporters will have already heard that Bobby Harrison has been loaned to Margate. I received an approach from Margate manager Mr. Hall, who was experiencing injury trouble with his players.

We at Gillingham always like to help other clubs, particularly in Kent, whenever we can. Relations with clubs in the county have not been good in the past but we are trying to foster better relations.

TRANMERE FINED

FOLLOWING their Third Division match at Gillingham on Saturday 1 March, Tranmere Rovers have been fined £100 by the Football League for failing to hand in their official teamsheet to the referee at least 30 minutes before the kick-off.

Tranmere announced yesterday (Wednesday) they have decided to lodge an official protest to the Football League about the fine and have joined Rotherham United in endeavouring to have the specific rule altered for next season. Rotherham have been fined a similar sum.

Tranmere met with travelling difficulties on their way to Gillingham, particularly from Euston station to Gillingham, and did not arrive at Priestfield Stadium until 20 minutes before the kick-off.

Nevertheless, they were the first team on the field and the match started promptly at 3 p.m.

DANGER ZONE

	— HOME —						— AWAY —					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barnsley	36	8	6	4	27	18	3	5	10	18	35	33
Gillingham	**37**	**8**	**8**	**3**	**31**	**20**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**14**	**35**	**32**
Barrow	38	8	6	6	24	23	4	2	10	20	39	32
Hartlepool	37	5	9	5	21	28	3	5	10	12	37	30
Crewe	36	10	3	6	33	23	1	4	12	10	34	29
Mansfield	33	8	4	3	23	13	1	6	11	19	35	28
Oldham	39	7	5	8	28	25	3	3	13	12	44	26
Shrewsbury	35	7	5	4	16	12	2	3	14	13	40	26

Percy—Gills' memory man

GILLINGHAM'S memory man — that's Percy Jackman. Quiz Percy on any happenings at Gillingham FC —formerly New Brompton — during the past 70 years and more often than not he will quickly solve your problem.

Percy, an extremely lively character at 83 years of age, lives in Wood Street, Brompton. He first saw New Brompton is season 1895-96 and even now you will rarely find Percy missing on match days at Priestfield Stadium.

Recently we posed the question: "Who has supported Gillingham longest?" This tag must undoubtedly be Percy's. Years ago he even used to travel around the country watching the Gills, but now he is content just to go to Priestfield.

This season he has missed only a couple of matches. One of these was the Gills' great show against Swindon. "I was really disappointed I missed it when I heard what a good show they put up," said Percy.

Which is the best performance Percy has seen from the Gills this season?

Treasured

"Without question their performance against Rotherham. They played really well that day," he said.

Percy possesses many newspaper cuttings, old pictures and records concerned with the club. Among his most treasured memories are New Brompton defeating Woolwich Arsenal after four drawn games, and their 2—0 victory against Southampton at The Dell.

"When the players returned from Southampton the town band played 'The Conquering Hero'," said Percy.

Finally I asked Percy what he thought of the present Gillingham team.

"They're not too good. The defence seems fairly sound to me. But they definitely need more strength up front as far as I am concerned," he said.

PERCY JACKMAN browsing through cuttings and pictures of Gillingham. His "Play Up Brompton" badge goes back a bit!

An early chance to give Gillingham the lead and a little encouragement was wasted when they missed this sixth-minute penalty, awarded after a foul on Gordon Riddick. Top, leading goal-scorer Brian Yeo steps up to take the kick, — but below, 'keeper Andy Donnelly saves the striker's weak attempt. R. 1369 and R. 1367.

Where the Gills are

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	20	16	2	2	68	26	34
Arsenal	17	13	4	0	53	12	30
Crystal P.	21	14	2	5	40	26	30
Tottenham	19	13	3	3	54	23	29
West Ham	19	8	9	2	36	21	25
Ipswich T.	18	10	4	4	50	28	24
Q.P.R.	20	8	6	6	39	38	22
GILLINGHAM	17	7	5	5	18	19	19
Southampton	17	7	4	6	32	26	18
Birmingham	21	7	4	10	35	30	18
Cardiff C.	19	7	4	8	22	29	18
Walsall	20	8	2	10	32	43	18
Bristol R.	18	8	1	9	27	18	17
Norwich C.	17	5	7	5	36	31	17
Bristol C.	16	7	2	7	27	27	16
Plymouth	20	6	4	10	17	31	16
Chelsea	18	6	3	9	30	33	15
Peterborough	19	3	9	7	23	31	15
Leicester	17	5	4	8	24	33	14
Swansea T.	17	4	6	7	25	36	14
Luton T.	18	4	6	8	18	41	14
Oxford U.	17	5	3	9	20	38	13
Bournemouth	18	3	6	9	20	38	12
Northampton	18	4	2	12	21	[illegible]	10
Reading	19	4	2	13	21	49	10
Swindon T.	18	4	2	12	14	32	10

YOUTHS WIN

GILLINGHAM Youths picked up one of their rare wins in the South East Counties League on Saturday when they visited Watford and emerged winners by three clear goals. David Peach grabbed two goals and the other was scored by Dick Tydeman.

Gills suffer serious blow on eve of vital trip

WOODLEY ILL

THE ill luck that has dogged Gillingham all season struck again this morning on the eve of the vital Easter programme. Speedy winger Derek Woodley phoned the club to say that he had been sick all night and he is definitely out of tomorrow's match at OLDHAM.

BY JOHN WINTER

Woodley will phone manager Basil Hayward at the club's Stockport hotel on Friday evening to say whether he is fit enough to travel up for Saturday's game at **MANSFIELD.**

With Mel Machin certain to play, unless he has a late reaction from his mid-week reserve match, the Gillingham coach will now take 13 players to the north this afternoon. They had a quiet morning—"I said they could come in and train if they wanted to" and will go to bed at about 10.30 this evening.

The three Easter matches are all tremendously important ones. Basil said this morning that he hoped to take at least a point from each of the two away matches, and he would not be playing defensive football. "The only switches in style we make when playing away are to ensure that we get our defensive play right when not in possession of the ball, we don't deliberately play defensive," he explained.

Three wins over Easter would satisfy him that with the games they had yet to play they would be safe from relegation. "Some people say we need 40 points to escape, but it could be more or less than that. If we continue to get a point a game we should be home," he said.

He was worried about the **BARROW** match at Gillingham on Monday in view of injuries and fatigue that might result from the two previous games.

The 13 players to travel are: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, Bailey, Williams, Quirke, Yeo, Riddick, Smillie, Meredith, Machin, Gilbert, Folds.

Gillingham Reserves have no game over the holiday.

Gillingham Supporters' Association's "Player of the Year" competition has prompted the Gillingham manager to suggest that a similar competition on an unlimited scale might be a good idea for the future, instead of restricting it to just association members.

"Surely any person who pays his five bob a week to watch Gillingham is entitled to say who he wants as player of the year?"

● For other soccer news of local clubs see page 34.

● Get Tuesday's POST for a complete run-down of the matches, plus all the junior soccer details as usual.

Third Div.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	37	22	9	6	60	24	53
Luton	38	21	8	9	61	33	50
Swindon	37	21	7	9	64	30	49
Plymouth	39	17	11	11	47	40	45
Bournemouth	37	18	6	13	55	37	42
Torquay	37	16	9	12	47	35	41
Stockport	37	14	13	10	61	54	41
Tranmere	39	16	9	14	56	58	41
Brighton	41	14	12	15	64	57	40
Walsall	39	13	13	13	40	41	39
Reading	39	13	12	14	58	56	38
Northampton	38	14	10	14	47	46	38
Rotherham	38	13	11	14	46	42	37
Southport	38	14	7	16	57	53	35
Bristol Rov.	38	13	9	16	54	58	35
Orient	37	12	11	14	40	40	35
Barnsley	37	11	12	14	46	54	34
Gillingham	37	10	12	15	45	55	32
Barrow	36	12	8	16	44	62	32
Hartlepool	37	8	14	15	33	65	30
Crewe	36	11	7	18	42	57	29
Mansfield	34	9	10	15	41	[illegible]	[illegible]
Oldham	36	10	8	21	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Shrewsbury	35	9	8	16	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Mel Machin back after injury

HEARTENING news for Gillingham fans is that talented wing-half Mel Machin makes his first appearance tonight (Tuesday) in the Football Combination match at Swansea after his injury at Swindon on 25 February.

Machin was carried off the County Ground at Swindon with a knee injury that has kept him on the sidelines during the Gills undefeated eight-match run.

His inclusion tonight means that Gillingham will have the services of the ever-present Machin for the vital Easter treble against Oldham (Good Friday), Mansfield (Saturday) and Barrow (Easter Monday).

The Gillingham line-up to visit Vetch Field tonight is: Bellotti; Ribbins, Simmons, Machin, Arnott, Peach, Osborn, Folds, Bray, Gilbert, Tydeman. Substitute, Knight.

HOME POINT

Gillingham extended their unbeaten League run to eight matches with Saturday's goalless draw against Torquay but at the same time it was a vital home point dropped in the club's battle to escape from the lower regions of the table.

Manager Basil Hayward has often said that the club cannot afford to lose points at home and this was the third draw in the eight-match run.

Now the club are faced with two away matches with clubs who find themselves in the same precarious position as Gillingham.

Yesterday (Monday) Mr. Hayward said: "The matches at Oldham and Mansfield will be very hard but if we can do something up there then we will pull ourselves out of trouble.

"But if we come away with nothing then we still have a very hard struggle on our hands."

The visit of Barrow on Monday features another club who are fighting against relegation. Although they have a similar number of points and have a match in hand, Barrow face seven away games in their remaining 10 matches.

Commenting on Saturday's match with Torquay Mr. Hayward said: "I thought it was a good game to watch and even when the penalty was missed early on it did not dishearten the team.

"Bailey went close almost immediately but later in the game we lost some composure, although we were still well in control of the play."

Gillingham Youths, who crashed 3-0 at Orient on Saturday in a South East Counties fixture, meet West Ham at Priestfield Stadium on Thursday, kick-off 7.30 p.m. On Saturday, the Youths have a home fixture with Orient.

The Reserves have no match during the Easter holiday but will visit Oxford United on Wednesday, 9 April.

GILLINGHAM'S 21-year-old local-born forward, Bobby Harrison, has been loaned to Margate and netted twice in the Southern League club's 5-1 win against Bedford on Saturday.

Harrison has made one first team appearance for the Gills.

WILL THE GILLS GO DOWN?

Fourth Div. could be a disaster

THE tension is fast reaching boiling point as the battle for Third Division survival nears its climax.

BY TERRY BOWLES

Gillingham have lost only two of their last 12 league matches but despite this and their one-place improvement following the home point from Saturday's Southport game, their true position has deteriorated. And they have scored only two goals in five games.

There is nothing like a hard struggle to bring out the best in a team and many of the bottom clubs—Shrewsbury and Oldham are classic examples—have been performing like championship contenders of late.

Gillingham's recent record can almost be put in this category, but with the string of two-point successes of the other clubs, they have found it impossible to move away from the danger zone.

Crewe are already four points adrift at the bottom and with a visit to Swindon booked tonight they must be favourites for the bottom spot. **Mansfield** have games in hand and following their home point from Barnsley last night, have the best chance of escaping.

Shrewsbury's recent form suggests that they will make good use of their extra games — Gillingham visit them for the last game of the season, while **Hartlepool,** who go to Walsall tonight, could be in trouble.

Oldham have only three games remaining and the vital one for them will doubtless be at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday.

With a three-point gap between Gillingham and the next club above them the only other very worried club are **Orient.** That makes seven, four of whom will be playing Fourth Division football next season.

Gills have to visit Brighton, Crewe and Shrewsbury and will be pleased to pick up three points from those fixtures, which means that their remaining home games with Oldham and Bournemouth will be all-important to them.

The big drop could be disastrous for them with Division Four consisting almost entirely of northern teams — Workington have 1,500 gate! — which would certainly see the club's financial state injured still further.

With the two home games left so vital, Gills want every bit of help and encouragement possible.

● The reserves have a re-arranged Combination fixture at Ipswich tonight and will no doubt be hoping to return to winning ways.

Team: Bellotti, Chapman, Simmons, Ribbins, Arnott, Bailey, Osborn, Peach, Bray, Folds, Tydeman. Sub.: Hill.

Where the Gills are

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	40	24	10	6	66	25	58
Swindon T.	40	23	8	9	62	32	54
Luton T.	41	21	10	10	62	35	52
Plymouth	42	17	13	12	50	44	47
Tranmere	41	18	9	14	57	62	45
Bournemouth	40	18	8	14	56	41	44
Torquay	40	17	10	13	51	41	44
Brighton	43	16	12	15	70	58	44
Stockport	40	15	13	12	60	57	43
Reading	42	15	13	14	65	59	43
Walsall	42	13	16	13	47	43	42
Southport	41	14	11	16	62	53	39
Northampton	39	15	9	15	58	52	39
Bristol R.	41	15	9	17	58	62	39
Rotherham	41	13	12	16	46	47	38
Barnsley	40	12	12	16	49	59	36
Barrow	39	14	8	17	48	65	36
Orient	40	12	11	17	44	54	35
GILLINGHAM	40	11	12	17	47	58	34
Mansfield	37	11	10	16	40	53	32
Oldham A.	42	12	8	22	47	76	32
Hartlepool	40	8	16	16	34	67	32
Shrewsbury	38	10	9	18	36	57	29
Crewe	39	11	7	21	44	66	29

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	23	18	2	3	73	29	38
Arsenal	21	16	4	1	61	14	36
Tottenham	23	15	3	5	61	26	33
Crystal P.	23	14	3	6	42	30	31
Ipswich	21	12	5	4	53	30	29
West Ham	23	9	11	3	40	26	29
Southampton	23	10	5	8	32	19	25
Bristol C.	21	11	3	7	40	28	25
GILLINGHAM	20	9	5	6	31	31	23
Q.P.R.	23	8	7	8	30	41	23
Cardiff C.	24	9	5	10	30	37	23
Chelsea	21	9	3	9	38	[illegible]	21
Walsall	22	8	5	9	33	[illegible]	21
Bristol R.	23	8	5	10	38	40	21
Norwich C.	22	6	8	8	41	38	20
Peterborough	23	5	10	8	27	34	20
Birmingham	23	7	5	11	39	34	19
Leicester C.	22	7	5	10	28	39	19
Plymouth	22	6	6	10	27	35	18
Luton T.	22	5	8	9	24	45	18
Oxford U.	21	7	4	10	25	42	18
Swansea T.	20	4	6	10	25	43	[illegible]
Swindon T.	22	5	4	13	18	[illegible]	[illegible]
Bournemouth	20	3	7	10	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Northampton	22	5	[illegible]	13	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Reading	24	4	3	17	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Machin comes through test

Gills take 14 for 'double'

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward announced yesterday (Wednesday) that he will take 14 players for the Easter away 'double' at Oldham (tomorrow) and Mansfield (Saturday).

And good news for supporters — a coach-load, organized by the Blue and Whites, will make the trip — is that talented wing half Mel Machin came through Tuesday's Combination fixture at Swansea without any ill effects to his damaged knee, and is included in the party.

It was Machin's first match since he twisted his knee at Swindon on 25 February. His return is a great boost to the team in the final run in, especially as midfield maestro Terry Simpson is out for the rest of the season with a broken leg.

Simpson was the key man in Gillingham's spring from defence to attack. He was the sparking plug with his sharpness and his flair for using the ball at the right time.

"With both players out we would be thin at the back and it would set us a problem for two vital away matches against clubs who find themselves in a similar position to us in the fight to avoid relegation.

"Before Simpson's unfortunate injury we had settled for what looked like being a successful system away from home that was giving us more open chances than we have had for a long time," said Mr. Hayward yesterday.

"Ray Bailey has come into the side now and if he gains confidence quickly he can offer as much as Simpson, but in a different way. He is a strong runner and is capable of getting the odd goal," added Mr. Hayward.

The 14 players who will make the trip north tomorrow are: John Simpson, Tony Weston, Mike Green, Ray Bailey, Bill Williams, David Quirke, Mel Machin, Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Gordon Riddick, Andy Smillie, John Meredith, Carl Gilbert and Bobby Folds.

SIX GOALS

Gilbert, who had a fine game in Gills' 1-0 Combination win at Swansea on Tuesday, has hit six goals in 14 first team appearances this term, and Folds has played in four matches.

Oldham, who have played two more matches than Gillingham and are four points behind the Kent club, had a dismal start to the season but since Christmas have shown a big improvement which has brought them some notable wins.

"There are no special plans for the two matches. But if we can take two points from the Oldham game on Friday the pressure will not be so great when we take on Mansfield the following day.

"Mansfield will be fresh and waiting for us. They lost 3-1 at Walsall last night and have no match on Friday," said Mr. Hayward.

Mansfield, who reached the quarter-finals of the F.A. Cup this term before going out 1-0 to Leicester, have a similar number of points as Oldham but have three matches in hand on the Gills.

An interesting note is that eight of their remaining 12 matches will be played at home — two against lowly placed clubs, Barrow and Shrewsbury.

News from Mansfield yesterday (Wednesday) was that injury and illness had left the first team squad with only 12 fit players.

NON-STARTER

Some injuries were experienced in Tuesday's defeat at Walsall and a definite non-starter will be Bob Ledger, formerly with Oldham, who has a strained groin. David Jones and Jimmy Goodfellow have 'flu.

Gillingham, who have conceded only five goals in their unbeaten eight-match run, have been playing well enough to come away with something from the two-match visit north.

If they can pick up valuable points then the players will go into Monday's home game with Barrow, another team fighting against the 'drop,' with added confidence.

A useful performance from Gillingham at the week-end will also act as a gate-boost for Monday's game which has a 3 p.m. kick-off.

Although Gillingham have gone eight matches without defeat, they have also played a similar number of games without an away victory. On the other hand, Mansfield are searching for their first win in six matches.

The Reserves have no match during the Easter holiday but tonight (Thursday) the Youth team will meet West Ham in a South East Counties League match at Priestfield Stadium. Kick-off 7.30 p.m.

On Wednesday evening, the Reserves will travel to Oxford for a Combination match.

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Watford	37	22	9	6	60	24	53
Luton T.	38	21	8	9	61	33	50
Swindon T.	37	21	7	9	56	30	49
Plymouth	39	17	11	11	47	40	45
Bournemouth	37	18	6	13	55	37	42
Torquay	37	16	9	12	47	35	41
Stockport	37	14	13	10	61	54	41
Tranmere	39	16	9	14	56	58	41
Brighton	41	14	12	15	64	57	40
Walsall	39	13	13	13	45	41	39
Northampton	38	14	10	14	47	46	38
Reading	39	13	12	14	58	56	38
Rotherham	38	13	11	14	45	43	37
Southport	36	14	7	15	57	52	35
Bristol R.	38	13	9	16	54	58	35
Orient	37	12	11	14	43	49	35
Barnsley	37	11	12	14	46	54	34
GILLINGHAM	37	10	12	15	45	55	32
Barrow	36	12	8	16	44	62	32
Hartlepool	37	8	14	15	33	65	30
Crewe	36	11	7	18	42	57	29
Mansfield	34	9	10	15	43	51	28
Oldham	39	10	8	21	40	69	28
Shrewsbury	35	9	8	18	29	52	26

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	22	17	2	3	72	29	36
Arsenal	20	15	4	1	58	13	34
Tottenham	22	15	3	4	61	25	33
Crystal P.	23	14	3	6	42	30	31
West Ham	23	9	11	3	40	26	29
Ipswich T.	20	12	4	4	54	29	28
Bristol C.	21	11	3	7	40	28	25
GILLINGHAM	19	9	5	5	21	20	23
Q.P.R.	22	8	7	7	39	40	23
Southampton	21	9	4	8	30	18	22
Chelsea	21	9	3	9	38	34	21
Bristol R.	23	8	5	10	38	49	21
Norwich C.	21	6	8	7	41	37	20
Cardiff C.	21	8	4	9	27	32	20
Walsall	20	7	5	8	34	31	19
Birmingham	23	7	5	11	35	34	19
Peterborough	22	4	10	8	25	34	18
Plymouth	21	6	5	10	18	32	17
Luton T.	20	5	7	8	21	41	17
Leicester C.	19	6	4	9	26	34	16
Oxford U.	19	6	3	10	22	40	15
Swansea T.	20	4	6	10	25	43	14
Bournemouth	20	3	7	9	23	42	13
Swindon T.	21	4	4	13	15	35	12
Northampton	22	5	2	15	25	55	12
Reading	22	44	2	16	22	61	10

BACK FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE FEBRUARY 25 . . .

Machin's big test tonight

MEL MACHIN makes a welcome return to soccer action after five weeks in tonight's Football Combination match between Swansea and Gillingham — a vital test of the wing-half's fitness before the start of the Gills' vital Easter programme, writes JOHN WINTER.

If Machin comes through the match without any ill-effects he is certain to be included in the party of 13 players who travel north on Thursday.

Gillingham play Oldham Athletic on Friday and Mansfield on Saturday—two vital games in which Machin's intelligent passing and clever control at the back would be big assets, particularly now that Terry Simpson is injured.

He was in peak form when a knee injury forced him to hobble off the field at Swindon on February 25, and hasn't played since.

The Gills' team at Vetch Field tonight will be Bellotti, Ribbins, Simmons, Machin, Arnott, Peach, Osborn, Folds, Bray, Gilbert, Tydeman. Sub.: Knight.

* * *

Post reader Mr. E. Richards, of Sanctuary Road, Gillingham, has written expressing concern at the way Terry Simpson was looked after on the Priestfield pitch when he broke his leg in the game against Crewe last week.

"After some delay a stretcher was brought on the pitch without any blankets . . . even the First Aid men in attendance did not deem it necessary to cover the patient . . . one of the foremost rules in first aid is to "keep the patient warm" —just some of the comments made by Mr. Richards.

Manager Basil Hayward this morning refuted any such suggestions. "The blankets were there but Simpson was near the touchline and we got him off quickly without having to use them," he said.

"We are lucky at this club to have better medical advice on hand, through the chairman (Dr. Grossmark) and Mr. Gerald Townsley, than most clubs, and I have no qualms about the treatment Simpson received."

SIMPLE GOAL FLOORS FLAT GILLS

A simple goal after just five minutes was enough to win this vital relegation and bring a decision to an utterly punchless midfield stalemate at Boundary Park on Good Friday . . . writes MURRAY EVANS.

It came through a terrible piece of defensive flatness on the part of Gillingham and was one of the two moments of excitement for the 5,517 crowd.

The other incident which brought a few seconds of light-hearted relief to this dour display came five minutes from half-time. Oldham 'keeper Gordine swung on the bar as Gordon Riddick challenged for an Andy Smillie corner and the bar collapsed.

The bar came completely away from the post and play was held up for four minutes while a club official climbed a ladder to repair the damage with a length of rope.

The football content of the game was drab, boring and lifeless. Oldham deserved their win because of the way Gillingham, playing well below the standard of which they are capable, allowed them to come forward and dominate the play.

Gillingham were slow to tackle and went in for the ball half-heartedly, leaving their opponents plenty of time and room in which to move.

The only players who gave their all in a match that was worth four points were the back row of Tony Weston, Bill Williams, David Quirke and Mike Green.

Smillie and John Meredith tried hard but failed to make any impression, while Brian Yeo and Riddick, on whom Gillingham pinned their striking hopes, were nowhere near up to standard.

Ray Bailey, in midfield, was another trier while Mel Machin, back after a long lay-off through injury, played as if he was not fully recovered and had long periods of inaccuracy with his passing.

Oldham took the lead when Gillingham made the first of many defensive mistakes. They failed to clear a cross from right-back Blair and the ball ran free to an unmarked

OLDHAM ATH. 1, GILLINGHAM 0

ERIC MAGEE who shot past a helpless John Simpson.

For a short spell the Gillingham defence looked shaky, with Simpson dropping two simple crosses, but they soon took control over a weak home attack.

Quirke, who had already been penalized twice for disputable fouls, was booked by referee Mr. M. Kerkhof (Bicester) in the 35th minute when he showed dissent after a "hands" decision.

Just before half-time the Gillingham defence went back to its previous panicky state when Simpson parried a shot from Chapman. Spence picked up the rebound, crossed, and Bill Williams cleared his own crossbar by a fraction.

CONCUSSION

The second half saw the match drag nearer and nearer a grinding halt, but after 53 minutes Gordon Riddick, who had showed little attacking flair apart from a header from a Smillie cross which went inches over, was carried off on a stretcher suffering from concussion after a collision in the Oldham goal-mouth.

Carl Gilbert came on to give the visitors' attack that extra bite, but without results, and the game continued towards its slow death.

Biggest menace to the Gillingham defence was Keith Bebbington, who almost added a second when he headed goalwards after Simpson had dropped another cross. But Weston was on hand to head off the line into Simpson's arms.

Gillingham's best chance — only their third shot at goal and their last — came when Gordine failed to cut out a Meredith cross and Bailey tried a clever lob shot which was a shade too high.

This was the start of a last five minutes of real Gillingham effort but they left it too late and Oldham had no trouble in holding out.

OLDHAM: Gordine; Blair, Bright; Bowie, Hunter, Joyce; Magee, Colquhoun, Spence, Bebbington, Chapman. Sub: Wood.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Weston, Green; Bailey, Williams, Quirke; Machin, Riddick (Gilbert), Yeo, Smillie, Meredith.

Attendance: 5,517.

No.44
H.T: 1-0
attend: 5,517

HAYWARD RELIEVED

RELIEVED to get two points, but disappointed by the second half showing—that was the opinion of many fans who saw Gillingham beat Barrow and also the opinion of manager Basil Hayward.

He said this morning: "We have still got to get maximum points from the three games at home and one or two away to be sure of staying up.

Of the two weekend defeats, Basil commented: "I was disappointed, particularly with the Oldham game. At Mansfield we played much better, but did a silly thing right on half-time to concede a penalty and that was it."

Gillingham's next senior game is at home to Southport, who have had a fair season, at Priestfield, on Saturday. It could be that the Gillingham manager will retain Gilbert at centre-forward after useful performances and again play Riddick at wing-half.

'SUCCESSFUL WEEK-END'

GILLINGHAM were supported at the Easter programme's two away matches by a coach-load of Blue and Whites' members.

The 43-strong party made the trip to Oldham on Friday, stayed the night at hotels in Manchester and went on to Mansfield the following morning.

Chairman of the Blue and Whites, Mr. Harold France, described the response to the trip as "very encouraging," as he originally only booked 26 places at the hotel.

"The week end was very successful and I think everybody enjoyed it," he said. "The only disappointment was the football.'

Yeo boobs and Gills lose control

Mansfield 2, Gillingham 0

THE result might have been heavier but Gillingham's display at Field Mill on Saturday was far more heartening than their efforts against Oldham the previous day.

Though they were never in with a real chance of winning — and rarely looked good for a point — here at least they showed an enthusiasm and a willingness to run and fight for the ball.

The reason they lost was not, on this occasion, for want of trying, but merely the fact that Mansfield were so intent on winning and played with such confidence that Gillingham could not keep them out.

The only time Gillingham presented any threat to the home defence was early in the first half when they showed such urgency about their play that it was hard to believe it was Gillingham and not Mansfield who had played a match only 24 hours earlier.

OPENING

If Brian Yeo had not had the miss of the match after 18 minutes to mark the climax of Gillingham's most dangerous period, the course of the game and the final outcome might have been different.

The chance came when Bill Williams, with things going so well at the back, went charging into the Mansfield half, collected a pass from Meredith and created the opening for Carl Gilbert.

Gilbert, who was retained for this match when Gordon Riddick did not recover from his injury in the Oldham encounter, left the ball for Yeo who turned well but shot weakly and off target when well-placed.

Gillingham had already had the home defence in trouble, Winger Ken Osborn, who received an urgent call to join the Gillingham party after Friday's defeat and was making his first-team debut, sent over a dangerous cross which 'keeper Hollins palmed away as the visitors' forwards closed in. .

For some minutes Gillingham kept up the chasing and worrying of the home defence, culminating in the Yeo effort, but after that their assault was virtually over.

Mansfield quickly came back into the game and had the Gills'

Writes Murray Evans

defence in trouble with a number of corners. From them Roberts fired narrowly over and Waller was inches wide with two good efforts.

The big difference in the attacking power of the two sides could now be shown by the effectiveness of high balls into the area.

For a while Yeo and Gilbert were failing to make any impression on the Mansfield defenders. The trio of home strikers, Partridge, Sharkey and Roberts, frequently won heading duels against the Gillingham back row.

Gillingham were also in trouble with crosses from the wings when, through John Simpson's lack of confidence in cutting them out and a strong blustery wind, Mansfield often went close.

As Mansfield kept up the pressure the Gills' defence began to show signs of panic and almost presented their opponents with a goal when Weston mis-headed the ball over Simpson's head.

Williams was on hand, however, to beat Partridge to the ball and put it over for yet another corner when only inches from the goal-line.

Despite their obvious superiority, Mansfield needed a penalty to give them a deserved lead. A minute from half-time Carl Gilbert, who had already been spoken to by the referee for a series of fouls, gave away the spot-kick when he pushed Boam in the area, and SHARKEY scored easily.

After the change-round there was no Gillingham fight-back, but a continued rearguard action. John Simpson made the save of the match from a shot from Goodfellow only two minutes after the re-start, and then Weston was on hand to save a certain goal after Partridge had intercepted a bad back pass from Quirke.

In attack Gillingham were almost non-existent. Ken Osborn was given no chance against full-back Hopkinson but he started Gillingham's best move with a pass down the wing to Ray Bailey. From the cross Gilbert headed the ball down to Smillie when it would have been easier to shoot and Smillie's shot from the edge of the box was easily charged down.

At the other end the Gillingham defence, re-inforced by John Meredith, individually played well but as a unit were far from water-tight and a second goal was almost inevitable.

It came 14 minutes from the end when Goodfellow took a corner on the right after Meredith had tackled back to concede the flag-kick, and ROBERTS volleyed home beautifully.

Mansfield: Hollins, Pate, Hopkinson, Quigley, Boam, Waller, Walker, Partridge, Sharkey, Roberts, Goodfellow. Sub: Jones.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Bailey, Williams, Quirke, Osborn, Gilbert, Yeo, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Machin.

Attendance: 4,959.

Pressure on the Barrow defence on Monday, but this time 'keeper Fred Else came out on top to clear the ball off the head of Gillingham skipper Gordon Riddick. Waiting for the loose ball is Carl Gilbert. R. 1465

No 45
H.T: 1-0
attend: 4,959

Barrow Easter 'Treble' foiled

GILBERT OPPORTUNISM REWARDED

A bad pass back by Barrow winger Storf three minutes before half-time lets in Carl Gilbert to shoot past Else and put Gillingham 2-0 up on Monday. R.1484

Gillingham 2, Barrow 0

THE effectiveness of Carl Gilbert as a striking force in the Gillingham line-up was seen to the full on Monday when his slick opportunism brought two well-taken goals and invaluable points from Barrow at Priestfield Stadium . . . writes TERRY OWEN.

Gilbert, a 13-goal man with the Reserves and in and out of the first team squad this term, *brought relief to the Gills who* had lost their two earlier Easter matches and at the same time wrecked Barrow's chances of a holiday hat-trick.

This was one match Gillingham had to win after their disappointments at Oldham and Mansfield if they wished to stay out of the bottom four bracket.

But once Gilbert, who harrassed defenders throughout, had put them on the goal trail after only 11 minutes the Gills played with confidence and always looking for goals were able to dominate the play for long periods.

There was some slackness in midfield but Barrow, with the exception of a period in the *first half, were generally con*tained by the back four of Tony Weston, Bill Williams, David Quirke and Mike Green.

SWIFT TACKLING

It was Quirke, who has come along in leaps and bounds since the season's start, who emerged as a tower of strength in the Gillingham defence. While Williams was often beaten by the clever George McLean, the centre-forward could make no headway against the swift tackling and covering of Quirke.

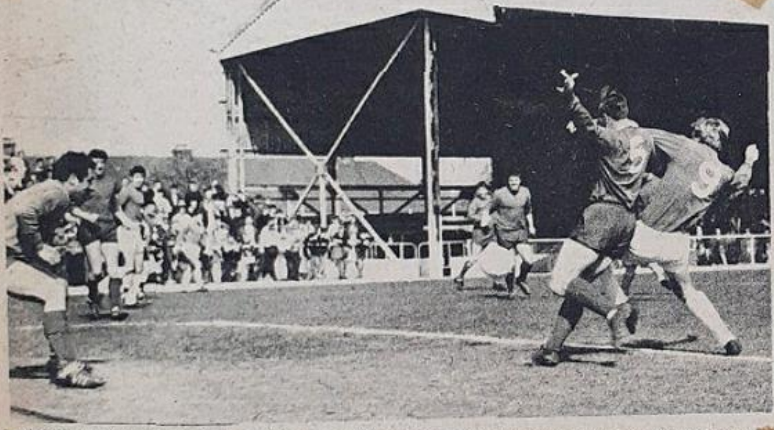
Good football was spasmodic in a match that maintained interest, but when Gillingham were in full flight they turned in some crisp attacking play that often left Barrow defenders stranded. It was only the superb positional play of experienced 'keeper Fred Else that prevented the home forwards from running up a much higher score.

Barrow were more prominent in the early stages as Gillingham took far too long to settle but after both Riddick and Smillie had gone close, Gilbert snatched the lead goal in the 11th minute.

Brian Yeo worked the ball well on the right, lost it, and then recovered to move forward and fire towards the far post. Else was caught in *no-man's land* and **GILBERT** moved in sharply behind pivot Arrowsmith to flick the ball into the net.

This was the signal for a Gillingham onslaught but Else was equal to everything thrown at him. After right-back Terry McDonald had been booked for a foul on John Meredith, the 'keeper saved well from Gilbert and Riddick.

A lack of urgency saw Gillingham suddenly lose their grip on the game and it was Simpson's turn in the home goal to shine. Two great saves in as many minutes robbed Barrow of an equalizer as Simpson threw himself across [illegible] eyed drive [illegible] afety, *and* then raced from his goal and block a drive from an unmarked McLean.



Carl Gilbert moves in to flick a Brian Yeo drive past Barrow 'keeper Fred Else for Gillingham's first goal at Priestfield Stadium on Monday. R.1486

Gillingham weathered this storm and in the 34th minute set up a great chance to increase their lead. Gilbert won possession near the corner flag and pulled the ball back for an unmarked Yeo, who crashed it against the advancing Else.

Two minutes later a Yeo-Gilbert-Smillie move ripped the Barrow defence apart and the little inside forward forced Else into a great fingertip save. From the resultant corner, Else had to use his feet to prevent Riddick's header finding the net.

Gillingham pressure was maintained and after Else had palmed away a Yeo scissors *kick, it was a mistake by team*mate David Storf which led to Gillingham's second goal.

Storf attempted a pass back after 42 minutes to Else from outside the box but failed to see **GILBERT** lurking close by, and the blond striker gratefully accepted the gift chance to fire past the advancing 'keeper.

The now familiar uneasy Gillingham in the early stages of the second period was soon apparent and slackness at the back almost cost an early goal.

Bebbington saw a power drive come back off a defender in a packed goal area and after four minutes only a brilliant save by Simpson from outside-*left Storf saved the day.*

Gillingham recovered their earlier composure and were never in any real trouble for the remainder of the half. Riddick and Smillie took control in midfield as Barrow's striking power faded and it was left to the individual efforts of McLean to provide any threat to the home goal.

But at the same time Gillingham were unable to present any notable threat to the Barrow goal. Else was equal to everything that went his way, although he was lucky to see McDonald clear a Weston lob after he had lost the ball in the sun.

Gilbert saw a first-time power drive come back off Yeo and then Else saved smartly from Gilbert following a neat build-up by Weston and Woodley.

With Barrow unable to make any impression on a now confident home defence Gillingham cruised through the rest of the half firmly in control and never looking in any sort of trouble.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Bailey.

Barrow: Else; McDonald, Davis, Harrison, Arrowsmith, Hartland, McCarthy, Morrin, McLean, Bebbington, Storf.

Attendance: 6,037.

'We must take maximum home points'

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward said after the Easter "treble" yesterday (Tuesday): "I was disappointed we were only able to come away with two points."

He added: "If we could have picked up at least three points from the matches then we would have had a reasonable Easter."

The position in the league table after the holiday programme has produced little change in positions. But now Gillingham go into two home matches against Southport (Saturday) and Oldham Athletic the following Wednesday which, providing maximum points can be obtained from each game, will lift the Stadium club further *away from the danger zone.*

Commented Mr. Hayward: "We must take maximum points from our three remaining home games — the other is against Bournemouth on 22 April — and try to pick up the odd point in our three away games.

"If we can help ourselves to points then we shall be alright. If we don't, then we shall have to rely on the results of other clubs and that is something I don't want to happen."

Mr. Hayward felt the players did not do enough in the matches at Oldham and Mansfield, but thought there was enough in the Barrow match on Monday to interest spectators.

"The second half performance dropped off a little against Barrow. We have got to realize that this must not happen until the opposition is really down."

ARM INJURY

The only casualty in Monday's clash with Barrow was John Simpson, who has an injured arm.

Tonight (Wednesday), Gillingham Reserves visit Oxford United for a Football Combination fixture and both Ray Bailey and Mel Machin *are* included in the line-up.

It is: Bellotti; Ribbins, Simmons, Bailey, Arnott, Machin; Osborn, Folds, Gilbert, Peach, Tydeman. Sub: Bray.

The Reserves have no match on Saturday but the Youth team will visit Fulham in the South East Counties League.

Attraction at Maidstone Road on Saturday will be Chatham Town's Kent League Cup semi-final with Bretts Sports, kick-off 3 p.m.

Where the Gills are

DIVISION 3

Watford	41	25	10	6	69	26	60
Swindon	41	23	9	9	64	34	55
Luton	42	22	10	10	65	35	54
Plymouth	43	17	14	12	52	46	48
Tranmere	42	18	9	15	67	63	45
Bournemouth	41	18	8	15	57	44	44
Torquay	41	17	10	14	51	42	44
Brighton	44	16	12	16	70	61	44
Walsall	43	14	16	13	48	43	44
Stockport	41	15	14	12	65	59	44
Reading	43	15	13	15	67	63	43
Southport	40	15	10	15	58	52	40
Rotherham	42	14	12	16	49	47	40
Bristol R.	42	15	10	17	60	64	40
Northampton	42	14	11	17	52	56	39
Barnsley	41	13	12	16	50	59	38
Barrow	40	15	8	17	49	65	38
GILLINGHAM	41	11	13	17	47	58	35
Orient	41	12	11	18	45	57	35
Oldham Ath.	43	13	8	22	48	77	34
Hartlepool	41	9	16	16	37	67	34
Shrewsbury	39	12	9	18	40	59	33
Mansfield	38	11	10	17	46	56	32
Crewe	40	11	7	22	44	67	29

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

Fulham	23	18	2	3	73	29	38
Arsenal	21	16	4	1	61	14	36
Tottenham	24	16	3	5	65	26	35
Crystal P.	24	15	3	6	45	30	33
West Ham	24	9	12	3	42	28	30
Ipswich T.	21	12	5	4	55	30	29
Bristol C.	22	12	3	7	42	28	27
Southampton	23	10	5	8	32	19	25
Walsall	23	9	5	9	39	33	23
GILLINGHAM	20	9	5	6	21	21	23
Q.P.R.	24	8	7	9	39	44	23
Cardiff C.	24	9	5	10	30	37	23
Chelsea	22	9	4	9	40	36	22
Peterborough	24	6	10	8	30	35	22
Bristol R.	24	8	5	11	39	52	21
Norwich C.	23	6	8	9	41	42	20
Birmingham	24	7	5	12	35	36	19
Leicester	22	7	5	10	29	35	19
Plymouth	22	6	6	10	21	35	18
Luton T.	22	5	8	9	24	45	18
Oxford U.	21	7	4	10	25	42	18
Swansea T.	20	4	6	10	25	43	14
Swindon T.	23	5	4	14	16	39	14
Bournemouth	20	3	7	10	23	42	13
Northampton	22	5	2	15	25	55	12
Reading	24	4	3	17	23	64	11

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

	29	24	4	1	118	31	52
Millwall	27	20	6	1	81	25	46
Ipswich T.	25	18	6	1	78	33	42
Orient	27	16	7	4	67	33	39
Charlton A.	29	15	5	9	67	43	35
Crystal P.	29	16	1	12	70	67	33
Tottenham	28	12	3	13	74	42	27
West Ham	29	9	8	12	50	65	26
Chelsea	25	11	2	12	64	52	24
Watford	30	10	3	17	45	82	23
Colchester	28	10	3	15	46	88	23
Luton T.	26	7	8	11	47	57	22
Fulham	27	9	4	14	37	46	22
Reading	28	7	5	16	43	90	15
Brighton	29	6	4	19	51	75	16
GILLINGHAM	25	5	2	18	25	63	12
Oxford U.	24	1	3	20	13	78	5

Basil Hayward's Own Column

SHOCK RESULTS CAN BE EXPECTED

THE players were grateful for the support received from fans who travelled to Oldham and Mansfield on Easter and it was a pity we could not have given them more satisfaction as far as results were concerned.

Results by other clubs this week have gone against Gillingham and sent us lower in the table, but it is usual at this time of the year that results do not go according to form.

Our collection of just two points from the Easter "treble" was not what we looked for. The 1-0 defeat at Oldham was a setback but in this game we did *do enough to even save a point.*

Unfortunately, this game saw us lose Gordon Riddick with concussion and he was ruled out for the trip to Mansfield the following day.

Like Oldham, Mansfield find themselves in the same position in the table as ourselves. But in this game on Saturday Mansfield's tactics of slamming the ball into the goal area to let their forwards chase was completely held by our defence.

The defence did everything it was asked to. But unfortunately Carl Gilbert gave a penalty away — awarded for pushing — just before the halfway stage and that set us on the road to our second defeat.

We had a couple of reasonable chances in both matches which were not taken. But generally, we rarely looked like conceding a goal but at the same time never looked capable of finishing off our own movements.

Barrow were the visitors to the Stadium on Monday. Several people I know had seen them playing at Orient and had warned me that while they would not offer a great deal up *front they would break quickly* out of defence.

From the outset our players were on their guard against this tactic and with the exception of one break by centre-forward George McLean in the first half the danger, I thought, was well-contained by the defence.

Carl Gilbert gave us a good start with an early goal and finished Barrow off with a second just before the half-time whistle.

Our performance in this game fell away in the second half. I would have liked to have seen a couple more goals, but at the same time it should be remembered the boys had three tough games in four days on hard grounds, which has a telling effect on feet and muscles.

The two points from the Barrow game lifted us up the table for a short time until Oldham, Shrewsbury and Barnsley won matches in midweek.

PRESSURE

These were not "form" results but at this stage of the season one can expect shock results — unfortunately these went against us and keeps the pressure on the players.

But with Orient going down at home to Torquay on Wednesday night it now means that the fight at the foot of the table is between six clubs instead of five.

Most of the bottom clubs have yet to play each other and some to meet the leading clubs. Before another week is out there might be more clubs fighting to escape the drop — and the more the merrier as far as we are concerned.

With more clubs fighting to aboid relegation the better chance we have of moving away from the danger zone.

GILLS IN A FALSE POSITION

SPORT POST-BAG

"LOUSY match," "Did you suffer the *whole* match?" and a raucous voice from the stands shouting "Get stuck in."

He could have done with a lesson from Charlie Marks, one of the best exponents of retreat and ultimate retrieving of the ball Gillingham ever had, but he and the other so-called "supporters" went on grumbling at the Barnsley match on Friday.

What do they really want?

Personally I enjoyed the match much better *than* the Swindon one which supporters said was the best of the season.

Barnsley in my opinion were twice as good on the day and made Gills play even better than when they beat Swindon.

I admit they were desperately unlucky through a flag-happy linesman who torpedoed one of the finest moves of the game that led to a disallowed goal.

It has been my misfortune owing to business ties to miss most of our games, but judging by what I have seen the Gills are in a false position. There is a wealth of talent and the encouraging factor is that the players are young enough to learn and can become one of the best teams we have ever *had.*

I particularly noted Carl Gilbert and think when *he is* able to give 90 minutes of cool concentration he has a most promising future.

May I suggest a little more intelligent reading of the game by some of our supporters, who in the main are second to none in loyalty? Meanwhile, my thanks to both teams for an enjoyable and all-action effort. Up the Gills!

J. H. BRISTOW
("Old 'un")

136 High Street
Chatham.

BRIAN YEO receives the award from Freddy Burden, MP, flanked by colleagues John Simpson and Mel Machin.

Brian tops player poll

ALTHOUGH the attendance was not what it might have been for Gillingham FC Supporters' Association's presentation social evening at Kent Alloys Canteen, Strood, on Saturday, there was no doubt about the popularity of the Player of the Year results.

Freddie Burden, MP for Gillingham, travelled down from his West London home to make the presentations. The man voted by the Gillingham supporters as the player of 1968-69 was leading goalscorer Brian Yeo, with Johnny Simpson in second place and Mel Machin third.

Brian, also celebrating his birthday, said: "I am naturally very pleased to win and the only way to repay the people who voted for me is to score more goals and keep us in the Third Division."

Johnny Simpson was his usual modest self. He said: "I am pleased with the result for two reasons. With all my recent benefit events, I have been involved with many of the supporters but I'm pleased really that they did not vote me into top spot because I have only played 21 games this season and the award is for this season only, not the past 11 years.

"I am also very pleased that Brian won because I have had a lot of faith in him in the past and this year he has finally made the breakthrough."

Bailey Gills only doubt

Southport — 'an efficient outfit'

AWAY victories by fellow-strugglers Oldham Athletic, Barnsley and Shrewsbury Town in midweek has seen Gillingham, despite their 2—0 success against Barrow on Monday afternoon, drop a position in the league table.

This has put the Stadium club in the position of being just two points away from the bottom four clubs and shows how vital the home matches with Southport (tomorrow) and Oldham (Wednesday) are to the Gills.

Gillingham's Easter holiday programme did not provide the result that manager Basil Hayward hoped for. Before leaving for Oldham on Good Friday, the Gills' boss said he would like to pick up something from the Oldham and Mansfield matches but instead saw 1—0 and 2—0 defeats in that order.

However, the position was eased slightly on Monday afternoon when Carl Gilbert picked up two opportunist goals to send Barrow to a 2—0 defeat and provide Gillingham with their first Easter points.

But while the danger might seem precarious, fourth-from-bottom Oldham have played two more matches and their visit to Priestfield stadium on Wednesday night should, providing Gills take two points from Southport tomorrow, finally see Gillingham escape from the danger zone.

Above Gillingham, by just two points, lie Barrow with an inferior goal average and only two home matches from their remaining seven fixtures.

The only member of the Gillingham first-team squad who is a doubtful starter for Saturday's match with Southport is wing-half Ray Bailey, who has a gastric sickness.

Mel Machin, fighting for fitness, had a successful outing with the Reserves in their 1—0 Football Combination defeat at Oxford on Wednesday evening.

Carl Gilbert provided extra devil and bite in the front line to continually worry Barrow's rearguard on Monday and is likely to retain a forward position. But manager Basil Hayward will not decide on his line-up until later today.

The line-up will probably be from: Simpson, Weston, Green, Machin, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Riddick, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith and Bailey.

The Gills boss travelled to Luton on Tuesday evening and saw Southport come away with a point from a goalless draw — "I thought Southport could well have won this game."

BROKE SHARPLY

His observations on the game were that Southport played well as a unit, were tight at the back, broke sharply and were generally an efficient outfit.

"We will have to go out on to the pitch on Saturday and settle down right from the kick-off if we are to come away with both points," said Mr. Hayward.

"Four points from our matches with Southport and Oldham should do the trick for us. I would like to think we could be out of trouble before we have to travel to Crewe and Shrewsbury at the end of the season," he added.

The Reserves have no match tomorrow but will visit Ipswich Reserves on Tuesday evening. The Youths visit Fulham tomorrow for a South Counties League fixture.

News from Southport yesterday was that the team that drew at Luton on Tuesday will take on Gillingham.

It is: Reeves, Alty, Curwen, Peak, Aindow, Clarke, M. Russell, Field, Andrews, A. Russell, Redrobe.

Carl Gilbert, scorer of the two goals that sunk Barrow on Monday afternoon, climbs high above defenders but this time was beaten by 'keeper Fred Else. Other Gillingham forwards on hand are Gordon Riddick and Brian Yeo. R.1486

An airborne Carl Gilbert is beaten to a Derek Woodley cross in the first half by Southport 'keeper, Brian Reeves. Also in attendance is Brian Yeo. R.1579

Forwards struggle in vain

VITAL POINT LOST IN THE SWIRLING WIND

Gillingham 0, Southport 0

GILLINGHAM lost a vital point in their anti-relegation fight at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday when they were held to a goalless draw by Southport ... writes **TERRY OWEN.**

For Gillingham it was their ninth home draw of the season but the lost point could very well prove crucial as the season's programme draws to a close and the fight at the bottom hots up.

The vicious swirling wind from goal to goal presented problems for both teams, but rarely could goalkeepers John Simpson and Brian Reeves have had easier afternoons.

Neither had a really testing save to make as both sets of forwards struggled in vain against uncompromising defenders who gave little away with their tight marking and first-time tackling.

Gillingham were slightly the more impressive side. They dominated the first half when they had the wind at their backs and even in the second period were a more lively outfit as Southport were content to lie back in defence and take the point they so obviously came for.

But Gillingham's pressure created few clear-cut scoring opportunities. The swirling wind all too often imposed a midfield stalemate which swamped any hint of aggression.

Gillingham's scoring threat in the first half came from the twin-spearhead of Brian Yeo and Carl Gilbert, and the occasional power drive from Derek Woodley.

But during this period when play was generally centred in the Southport half it is difficult to understand why Gordon Riddick's obvious heading ability was not used up front.

CLOSE MARKING

The Gills continually pumped the ball high into the Southport half but the close marking of pivot Roger Aindow and Malcolm Russell, wearing the number seven shirt but a member of the back four, all too often contained the Gilbert-Yeo threat.

Riddick's presence up front, especially in this half when things were going Gillingham's way, would have taken some pressure off Brian Yeo and might have presented the striker with scoring opportunities.

At the back Gillingham were, with the odd danger presented by George Andrews and Colin Alty, usually in command and the back four of Tony Weston, Bill Williams, David Quirke and Mike Green comfortably contained everything that went their way.

Gillingham's biggest fright came in the 81st minute and it was one of the few seconds of excitement either goal area experienced.

After a period of Gillingham pressure Southport broke sharply from the back. Eric Curwen had over-lapped on the wing and his cross was flicked on by George Andrews for Colin Alty to hook the ball over Simpson's head and against the crossbar.

After an uneasy start which saw both teams struggle in the wind Gillingham swept upfield in the seventh minute. Williams saw a header from a Woodley corner kick blocked and an off-balance Riddick hooked the ball wide.

Woodley then came into the picture three minutes later. He cleverly tricked Curwen and crossed hard and high into the area for Gilbert to head over.

But in the 15th minute Gillingham almost snatched the lead goal with an unexpected 30-yard drive from Yeo that flashed inches wide as Reeves scrambled across his goal.

It was not until the 19th minute that Southport came into the game as an attacking force. Andrews was brought down just outside the box and Williams just beat Andrews to the free-kick which was deflected by a defender.

Gillingham hit back through a Woodley lob that passed narrowly over, a Gilbert header that was cleared off the line by Andrews who had gone back to help a harassed defence, and a glancing Riddick header which left Reeves helpless.

Simpson was called upon for the second time to leave his goal when he did well to hold a curling cross from Alex Russell, and at the other end Yeo went close with a header from Woodley's cross.

As was expected Southport provided the early second half pressure with the wind at their backs, but Simpson was not troubled by an Andrews header which he easily collected.

HIGH AND OVER

But Southport did miss an opportunity in the 55th minute. A right wing corner completely beat the Gills' defence and Andrews hooked his shot high and over from just in front of the goal.

Gillingham weathered this pressure and began to take control in midfield. Riddick worked tirelessly to bring some sort of rhythm and method into attacks, prompting from the back and occasionally breaking forward to have a go himself.

In the 56th minute he saw a curling drive pushed away by Reeves and four minutes later Green went up for a Woodley corner kick, but saw his power drive blocked by a defender.

As the game wore on so desperation crept into Gillingham's play. Attacks became ragged and carried little threat, while passes all too often went astray or were easily spotted by the Southport defenders.

What proved to be Gillingham's last chance of picking up both points came in 78th minute. Smillie and Woodley linked up well to send Riddick into the box but he fired over from a good position.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Green; Riddick, Williams, Quirke; Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Machin.

Southport: Reeves; Alty, Curwen; Peat, Aindow, Clarke; Russell (M), Field, Andrews, Russell (A), Redrobe. Sub: Pearson.

Attendance: 4,511.

A first half incident as Brian Yeo, watched by team-mate Bill Williams, heads over the Southport goal. R. 1578

No 47
H.T: 0-0
attend: 4,511

A packed Southport penalty area in the first half at Priestfield Stadium as Gillingham press for a quick goal. Skipper Gordon Riddick leaps high for a Derek Woodley cross but saw his glancing header go inches wide. R. 1575

'Relieved we didn't lose'

DISAPPOINTED not to win but more relieved not to lose. That was Gillingham manager Basil Hayward after Saturday's wind-torn match.

Despite the fact that the Gillingham forwards failed to use their first half chances, the defence played well and Basil said this morning. "The lads got down to it in the second half and stopped Southport from breaking. I was relieved we did not throw both points away."

He was worried at half time because Gillingham had not managed to score, though the wind behind them did make the running ball difficult to control.

There are no injury problems and the team for Wednesday's equally crucial home match against Oldham is likely to be selected from the same 11, plus Mel Machin who was substitute on Saturday.

Gillingham's position, though slightly improved on paper, worsened over the weekend because five of the bottom nine clubs — Barnsley, Barrow, Hartlepool, Oldham and Shrewsbury all won.

SOUTHPORT goalkeeper Reeves stands tense in front of his line, but massed defenders have cleared this first-half corner before he can be seriously tested. Gillingham players in the action are the grounded Carl Gilbert, Brian Yeo and Bill Williams.

DANGER ZONE

		—HOME—					—AWAY—					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Barnsley	41	10	6	4	30	18	3	6	12	20	41	38
Barrow	40	10	6	6	27	23	5	2	11	22	42	38
Gillingham	**41**	**9**	**9**	**3**	**33**	**20**	**2**	**4**	**14**	**14**	**38**	**35**
Orient	41	9	7	5	26	18	3	4	13	19	39	35
Oldham	43	9	5	8	32	26	4	3	14	16	51	34
Hartlepool	41	6	10	5	25	29	3	6	11	12	38	34
Shrewsbury T.	39	8	6	4	19	14	4	3	14	21	45	33
Mansfield T.	38	10	4	3	26	13	1	6	14	20	43	32
Crewe Alex.	40	10	3	8	33	26	1	4	14	11	41	28

Basil Hayward's Own Column

PRESSURE STILL ON PLAYERS

WITH just 17 days left before we complete our programme the lower region of the Division Three table provides supporters with interesting reading and shows just how tough it can be with four up and four down operating in the division.

It is unfortunate that the "four" system does not operate throughout the Football League because there is no doubt that it does provide interest until the season's end, not only for the bottom clubs but also for those at the top.

There has been tremendous interest in the Third Division this season and it is far from over. The two points we won from Oldham on Wednesday night have improved our position slightly but still leaves us in the danger zone because clubs below us have also won their matches.

In the higher divisions the system of two up and two down means that midway through a season, relegation and championship clubs can be often earmarked. But in Division 3, a club might be safe and a month later they could find themselves in real trouble.

IN TROUBLE

The unbeaten run we recently had at Gillingham would have been a promotion run had it taken place earlier in the season. But we find ourselves in trouble and I think this pin-points the need in Division 3 to fight all season and not relax at any stage.

We now go in to a tough match at Brighton on Saturday and this, coupled with our last home game against Bournemouth on Tuesday night, is a really vital game for us.

I would like to come away with a point from Brighton and take two on Tuesday. If this could be done it would lighten some of the pressure on the players when they travel to fellow-strugglers Crewe and Shrewsbury in the next fortnight.

Pressure is still on us to avoid the drop but if we can keep on taking the odd points here and there then we should be alright.

The next 10 days will sort matters out at the foot of the table as some of the clubs have to play each other, and even by the middle of next week we might have some idea how things will go.

As far as Wednesday's match is concerned, I thought we did well to take both points on the hard ground. The gae, with its robust incidents, gave spectators an interesting spectacle.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Supporters' Association on their "Player of the Year" dance last Saturday. It was well-organized and held in excellent surroundings, but I was disappointed it did not receive more support from the public.

NO CHANGE GILLS TO MEET OLDHAM

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward said yesterday (Monday) that the line-up to meet Oldham Athletic at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow night will be chosen from the 12 players named for Saturday's goalless draw with Southport.

They were: John Simpson, Tony Weston, Mike Green, Gordon Riddick, Bill Williams, David Quirke; Derek Woodley, Brian Yeo, Carl Gilbert, Andy Smillie, John Meredith. Sub: Mel Machin.

Oldham, who defeated Gillingham by the game's only goal at Easter, have produced some fine performances since Christmas, after being at the foot of the table for most of the season.

At the moment Gillingham occupy seventh from bottom place, level on points with Orient but with a slightly better goal average, and one point above both Oldham and Hartlepool.

INJURIES

Yesterday, Oldham manager Mr. Jack Rowley said that a number of injuries meant he would not be able to name his line-up until shortly before the kick-off. They include 'keeper Gordine (shoulder), Bowie (back) and Doyle (ankle).

Commenting on Saturday's draw against Southport the Gills' boss said: "Considering the high wind and dry ground I thought both teams did quite well. Things were going our way in the end and we settled down well against the wind."

Tonight (Tuesday), the Reserves travel to Ipswich for a Football Combination fixture and the line-up is: Bellotti, Chapman, Simmons, Ribbins, Arnott, Bailey, Osborne, Peach, Bray, Folds, Tydeman. Sub: Hill.

Gillingham travel to Brighton on Saturday and the Reserves have a home fixture at the Stadium against Bristol Rovers.

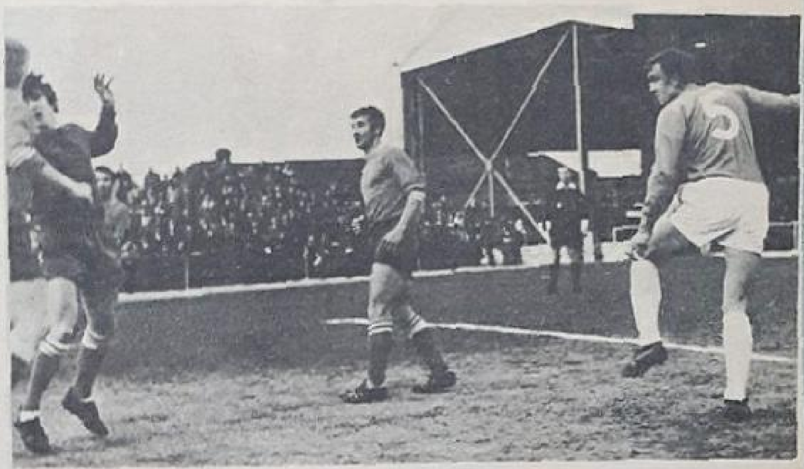
Southport 'keeper Brian Reeves finds himself under pressure from Brian Yeo in the early stages of the second half of Saturday's goalless draw at Priestfield Stadium. R 1577

Forwards' finishing shown up as . . .

Williams heads Gills to a safer position

GILLINGHAM 2, OLDHAM 0.

IT WAS a sure sign of Gillingham's well-known abysmal finishing that they had to rely on two goals from defence stalwart Bill Williams to give them the points against a vastly inferior Oldham at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday, writes **MURRAY EVANS**



Bill Williams comes up to head home a brilliant first goal, following a corner by Derek Woodley, against Oldham on Wednesday night. Below, Oldham left-back Bright heads the ball away but Williams' header was over the line for the second goal. R.1667

The goals, which came in the 19th and 29th minutes were almost identical.

With Gillingham pressing hard for a goal Oldham left back, David Bright, played safe and conceded a corner. Derek Woodley sent over the flag-kick and with Brian Yeo running across the goalmouth as a diversion, BILL WILLIAMS leaped high to head home.

Ten minutes later Bright gave away another corner and again Woodley sent the kick towards the far post.

As everyone stood still, WILLIAMS back-pedalled and positioned himself well to head goalwards. Bright almost saved the day when he headed out but linesman, Mr. R. S. Ashford, flagged for a goal.

Two well-taken goals then from a dead-ball position and if intentional, an excellent tactic. In the past, however, Williams' presence in the opposing goalmouth has usually been as an obstruction while others moved in for the kick, so only the 12 Gillingham players and manager Basil Hayward will really know how much luck contributed to those goals.

EASIER CHANCES

Gillingham, dominant throughout, had some far easier chances but somehow managed to squander them all.

From the start it was obvious they were going for a win and that it would take more than this weak Oldham side to stop them. Smillie sent a snap-shot wide, an off-balance Gordon Riddick put in a feeble effort, and Gilbert had a shot charged down on the edge of the area.

Oldham had a relentless task in keeping Gillingham at bay and gave away a succession of corners in a bid to earn some breathing space. From one of these Riddick headed inches over.

Mike Green, who was rarely troubled in defence, was given a number of opportunites to move up and help keep the pressure on the visitors.

He made some good interceptions and from one of these he set Woodley on the move. The winger put the ball inside to Yeo who made a shocking miscue but 'keeper Barry Gordine still had to tip it over.

Williams' goals gave Gillingham the lead their persistent efforts deserved and all looked set for a goal spree.

It was not to be. Gillingham eased off, content to await the opportunity for a knock-out punch in the second half, but that was not to be either.

In fact, having eased off, they could have found themselves without a half-time lead at all had Oldham taken their two worthwhile chances.

Between Gillingham's goals, Oldham centre-forward Reg Blore placed a good ball for fellow-striker Alan Spence, who swivelled on his left foot, connected with his right and sent a shot flashing past the left-hand post.

Their only other chance came shortly before the change-round when the home defence was caught flat-footed by a ball across the face of the goal. Spence missed his shot and 'keeper John Simpson pushed Bebbington's effort to safety.

INEFFICIENT

In the second half Gillingham continued to loom dangerous in their build-ups, if not in the goal area, and created some good chances against a grossly inefficient but uncompromising Oldham defence.

They were frequently stopped only by some vicious tackles by the visitors, for which a number of players received a caution from the referee, and what opportunities remained Gillingham squandered through their own incompetence.

Persistent rough play by the Oldham defence resulted in left half Jim Frizzell being booked by referee, Mr. R. E. Johnson (Lowestoft) for a foul on Gilbert.

Despite Gillingham's obvious superiority in the air—ably demonstrated by Williams' two efforts—their crosses from the wings, and this applied in particular to Derek Woodley, often came over knee-high and caused little trouble.

Fifteen minutes from the end Brian Yeo, who had worked hard, as did all the team, made the miss of the match. He easily out-ran Hunter to a ball up the middle—and with no-one but Gordine to beat, shot wide of the right-hand post.

Five minutes from time Oldham were reduced to ten men—Blair had already substituted for Bebbington—when Gilbert collided with Gordine, who was already injured after a tackle by Yeo. The 'keeper was carried off on a stretcher and Hunter took over in goal.

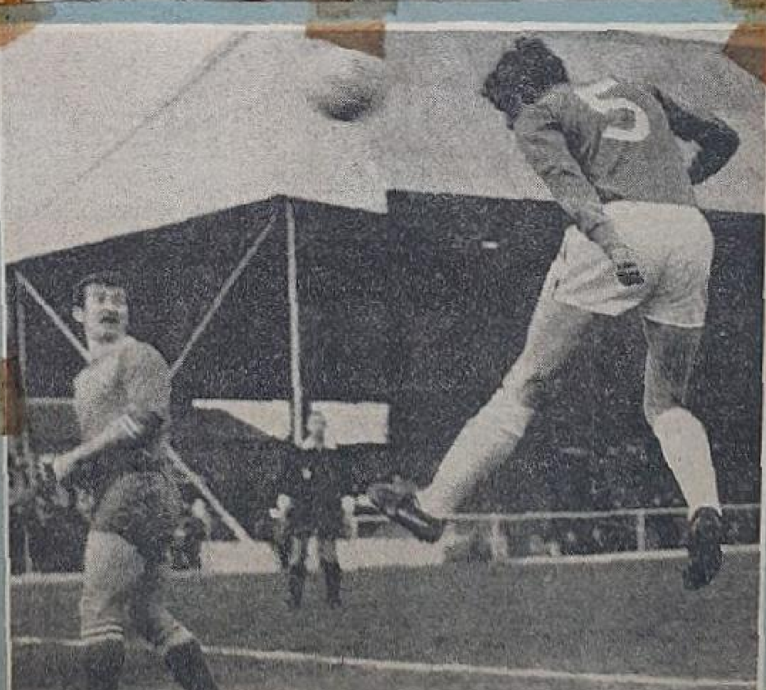
This was the signal for an all-out attack on the visitors' goal but the whistle went before they had a real chance to take advantage.

Gillingham deserved their victory for the way the team seemed to be pulling together to avoid relegation, creating some good chances up front and the way the defence, with man-of-the-match Bill Williams outstanding, allowed virtually nothing through.

The win put Gillingham in a much safer seventh-from-bottom position.

Gillingham: J. Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Machin.

Oldham: Gordine, Wood, Bright, Hunter, Joyce, Frizzell, Magee, Spence, Blore, Bebbington, Chapman. Sub: Blair. Attendance: 5,736.



WRONG-FOOTED, an Oldham defender looks back in horror as Bill Williams jumps to head Gillingham's first goal.

No 48
HT: 2-0
attend: 5,736

GILLINGHAM
Roll call

Aug.	10	Tranmere	A	0—2		
	14	ORIENT*	H	2—2	5,988	Quirke (2)
	17	ORIENT	H	2—2	5,524	Woodley T. Simpson
	20	Orient*	A	0—3		
	24	Barnsley	A	1—3		Gibbs
	27	Rotherham	A	0—1		
	31	LUTON	H	1—3	8,227	Williams
Sept.	7	Torquay	A	0—2		
	14	BRIGHTON	H	5—0	4,445	Gilbert (2), Yeo (2), Woodley
	16	Barrow	A	1—2		Yeo
	20	Southport	A	2—4		Yeo, Woodley
	28	MANSFIELD	H	1—1	4,630	Woodley
Oct.	4	Reading	A	2—3		Yeo (2)
	9	ROTHERHAM	H	2—0	5,525	Gilbert, Yeo
	12	STOCKPORT	H	0—0	5,314	
	19	Bristol Rovers	A	1—5		Riddick
	26	PLYMOUTH	H	1—0	5,170	Riddick
Nov.	2	Watford	A	1—2		T. Simpson
	5	Northampton	A	1—0		Yeo
	9	WALSALL	H	4—0	4,857	Smillie, Yeo (2), Riddick
	16	Orient†	A	1—1		Smillie
	20	ORIENT†	H	2—1	9,563	Riddick (2)
	23	SHREWSBURY	H	4—1	5,270	Riddick, Simpson, Yeo, Machin (pen.)
	30	Bournemouth	A	0—2		
Dec.	7	Luton†	A	1—3		Yeo
	13	Stockport	A	0—5		
	21	BRISTOL R.	H	0—2		
	26	READING	H	2—2	4,692	Yeo (2)
	28	Plymouth	A	1—1		Riddick
Jan.	11	WATFORD	H	0—5	6,641	
	25	N'HAMPTON	H	2—0	4,532	Yeo, Woodley
	28	Walsall	A	1—2		Yeo (pen.)
Feb.	1	HARTLEPOOL	H	2—2	4,785	T. Simpson, Woodley
	25	Swindon	A	0—1		
Mar.	1	*TRANMERE*	*H*	*1—1*	*3,860*	*Gilbert*
	3	Orient	A	1—1		Gilbert
	5	SWINDON	H	2—0	6,104	Riddick, Gilbert
	10	Hartlepool	A	1—1		Riddick
	14	BARNSLEY	H	1—1	5,961	Riddick
	22	Luton	A	1—1		Yeo
	26	CREWE	H	1—0	5,072	Yeo
	29	TORQUAY	H	0—0	6,200	
Apl.	4	Oldham	A	0—1		
	5	Mansfield	A	0—2		
	7	BARROW	H	2—0		Gilbert (2)
	12	SOUTHPORT	H	0—0	4,516	
	16	OLDHAM	H	2—0	5,736	Williams (2)
	19	Brighton	A			
	22	BOURNEM'TH	H			
	30	Crewe	A			
May	5	Shrewsbury	A			

* League Cup † F.A. Cup

***Appearances** to date*, including League and FA Cups: Bailey 23 and 3 as sub; Bellotti 23; Folds 3 and 1 as sub; Gibbs 7; Gilbert 17 and 1 as sub; Green 43; Machin 33; Meredith 43; Osborne 1; Quirke 24 and 5 as sub; Riddick 41 and 1 as sub; J. Simpson 22; T. Simpson 35 and 2 as sub; Smillie 23; Thear 3; Weston 30; Williams 44; Woodley 43; Yeo 37.

Goalscorers: Yeo 16, Riddick 10, Woodley 6, Gilbert 8, T. Simpson 4, Williams 3, Smillie 2, Quirke 2, Machin 1, Gibbs 1.

Record (including League and FA Cups): P 47, W 13, D 15, L 19, goals for 55, against 71.

CARL GILBERT leaps above the opposition in a first half attack.

HAYWARD 'STILL WORRIED'

LAST night's match must have been one of the most physically hard either side have played all season and Gillingham were lucky to come out of it with only cuts and bruises.

Oldham, who had two men carried off, thought that goalkeeper Barry Gordine had a broken leg, but fortunately it was only badly bruised.

Basil Hayward, Gillingham manager, said this morning, "I'm still a bit worried about our position because the other sides are picking up points. We need three or four points and will try and get some at Brighton on Saturday."

He was pleased with his side's play but thought they should have put one or two more goals in the net.

Former centre-forward and now one of the club coaches, Hughie Russell, acted as trainer, but he was nowhere near as busy as his opposite number for Oldham, who seemed to be more on the pitch than off it.

Gillingham's trainer for five years, Jimmy Boswell, left the club this week after a "difference of opinion."

Brighton will be tough

TWO invaluable points from the home success against Oldham Athletic on Wednesday evening slightly eased Gillingham's relegation problem but tomorrow (Saturday) they face a formidable task at Brighton.

Brighton boast an unbeaten home record that was extended to 15 matches with Wednesday's 2-2 draw with Tranmere Rovers, while Gillingham have gone 10 matches without an away victory.

In the first half of the season Brighton struggled in the division's lower region but the arrival of Freddie Goodwin as manager brought about a revival that quickly lifted the club out of the danger zone.

It is Brighton's last game of the season and will be that much togher fro the Gills as the "Seasiders" will obviously want to end the season on a winning note in front of their supporters.

COX RETURNS

Yesterday Gills' boss, Basi Hayward said: "If we can get a point from Brighton it will take some pressure off the players — it is a vital game for us."

Tuesday will see the visit of Bournemouth, managed by former Gillingham boss Freddie Cox, at the Stadium and it is Gills' last home game.

Tomorrow, Gillingham will rely on the 12 players selected for the Southport and Oldham matches: Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke; Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith, Machin.

The Reserves have a home match at the Stadium tomorrow, kick-off 3 p.m., against Bristol Rovers and will visit Luton Town on Monday evening.

TRAINER AXED AFTER 27 YEARS

A shock announcement came from Gillingham Football Club this week — trainer Jim Boswell has *been sacked after* more than 27 years' association with the club.

Manager Basil Hayward has taken over control of training for the first team squad with John Arnott.

Jim, who helped the club to the Fourth Division Championship in 1964-5 in his first season as trainer, told the Chatham News he did not wish to comment on his departure from the club but added: "I have finished and that is all I want to say."

But Jim, a welder by trade, said he would like to stay in football — "my heart and soul are in the game and I think I still have something to offer."

He left Priestfield Stadium on Monday, the day after his differences with the club took place, and he did not return to the ground to see Wednesday's win against Oldham.

"I would have liked to have been at the match," he said, "but I thought it best to stay away."

Jim, aged 47, started his soccer career with his native Chester at the age of 17, and

played in the Regional League during the war years against the noted Manchester and Liverpool clubs.

After a season with Sheffield Wednesday in 1941, he played for Gillingham the following year while serving with the Royal Engineers at Chatham. His first Gillingham game was on Easter Monday, and also in the line-up were Stan Cullis, Birmingham manager, and current West Ham secretary, Eddie Chapman, who were both P.E. instructors at Brompton Gymnasium.

After signing for the club in 1943, Jim played 13 seasons for them, mainly as a wing-half, and became the target for many of the country's top clubs. He remained at Priestfield Stadium, however, and was appointed skipper.

He twice captained them to the Southern League championship and was one of the players retained when the club was re-elected to the Football League in 1950.

He left Gillingham in 1958 to join Gravesend and Northfleet in the Southern League, spent some time with Tonbridge, and later gave up football to *concentrate on being a welder.*

In 1963 he met Gillingham manager Freddie Cox and was asked to become part-time trainer at the Stadium. The following year he became full-time first-team trainer.

He has been a qualified F.A. Coach for 15 years and four years ago was team coach and manager to the British Police team that took part in an international tournament at Marseilles.

Finally he said: "I parted on good terms with Gillingham. It is now finished and water under the bridge."

John Simpson comes out to collect during a first half attack by Oldham on Wednesday. In attendance are team-mates David Quirke and Tony Weston. R.1664

Youths storm Gills fans' bus

A COACH carrying Gillingham supporters — some of them women and girls—was besieged by 50 Brighton youths after Gillingham's w i n at Brighton on Saturday, writes **JOHN WINTER.**

The youths, shouting obscenities and spitting over the windows, chased the coach for half-a-mile in slow-moving traffic despite a police escort. Several of the youths had large rocks in their hands, but did not throw them.

Earlier, four Medway boys took refuge in the coach after being chased from the ground by a big group of youths.

The storming of the coach was one of the worst incidents witnessed on away trips this season, said Mark Agate, press officer of the Gillingham Supporters' Association, which ran the trip.

Once before — at Orient — a coach was held up when a dozen youths laid down in front of it.

At Brighton, a second coach organised by the Blue and Whites Association left later in the evening without trouble.

About five youths were [illegible] from the ground by [illegible] before the match.

[illegible] report and comment on back page.

CHUCK 'EM OFF

AFTER the pleasant weekend with a party of Gillingham fans up north at *Easter, I experienced the* other end of the stick on Saturday when the coach I was in was mobbed by screaming Brighton supporters.

A [illegible] pity to have to say [illegible] two or three of the Medway boys on the coach were just as bad as their Brighton enemies, what with their steel capped boots, swearing and taunting.

As the coach driver asked, why did they have to spoil it for other people, who just came to enjoy the football?

I suggest that next time any young thugs are chucked off the coach, and left to discuss why with their rivals.

J.W.

Gillingham's 'keeper **JOHN SIMPSON** saves from an Albion attack, at the Goldstone today, with **ALEX DAWSON** sprawling on the ground.

WOODLEY BURST BRINGS GILLS A BONUS WIN

Gillingham 'keeper John Simpson (by post) waits to collect a corner kick, but the ball is diverted out of play

Powney punches clear as Gillingham force a corner

Gillingham centre-forward Gilbert heads for goal at the Goldstone this afternoon

BRIGHTON 0, GILLINGHAM 2

IT was the result no-one expected. Gillingham went to the Goldstone Ground, Brighton, on Saturday hoping to win a point in their anti-relegation battle. Instead they joyfully came away with two to considerably ease their fears.

Just for once the roles of Gillingham and their opponents were reversed. It was Brighton who dictated play, creating and wasting plenty of opportunities — including a penalty — while Gillingham had few chances but snapped up the two that mattered.

From beginning to end it was Brighton's game with Gillingham clinging desperately to a point, aided by Brighton's pathetic finishing.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, however, it looked all over. Brighton's attacking wing half Howard Wilkinson burst into the Gillingham area from the right, was brought down by a joint effort by Mike Green and David Quirke, and referee Mr. D. Smith, had no hesitation in awarding a penalty.

writes Murray Evans

Once again, as Brighton had done countless times before, Gillingham were given a reprieve as Eddie Spearrit fired the spot kick high over the bar.

After dominating for so long Brighton then began to lose heart. Gillingham gained it and ten minutes later went into an undeserved lead.

Winger Derek Woodley, who had so far contributed so little, suddenly decided it might be worth playing after all and left the home defence standing with a terrific burst of speed down the wing. He sent over a hard cross and **CARL GILBERT** glanced the ball with his head into the net off the far post.

Three minutes later Gillingham tied up the match and even had the home supporters applauding the sort of goal they have not scored in a long, long time.

John Meredith started the move with a crossfield pass to Woodley who again left full-back Templeman yards behind with a run down the wing. This time he did not cross but pulled the ball back for **ANDY SMILLIE** to fire a thundering shot past a helpless Brian Powney from well outside the area.

A magnificent goal from a beautifully controlled shot — but the type of shot we have often seen end up high in the Rainham stand at Priestfield Stadium.

For the last quarter the sides were evenly matchedbut Gills had already done the damage and earned themselves two points to help them away from the relegation zone.

From the start Brighton had Gillingham in trouble with wingers Kit Napier and Dave Armstrong each a yard faster than Weston and Green.

From the crosses the Gills' defence looked rather unsure in the middle and on three occasions in quick succession Alex Dawson outjumped them all but headed wide each time.

Gillingham responded in similar fashion and from a Woodley cross Gilbert headed into Powney's arms. Shortly after Gilbert, sent away with a good ball from Brian Yeo crossed from the left and Powney tipped the ball over

Gillingham attacked only spasmodically, however, and for the most part it was left to Brighton to produce the entertaining moves, only to finish them with some typical end-of-season football.

THROUGH PASS

With one particularly slick move Brighton left the Gillingham defence in shreds. The ball went quickly from Henderson to Wilkinson to Lawton, who left Green standing with a through pass to Kit Napier.

The winger crossed to the far post for Dawson but Tony Weston was in first to head for a corner.

The Gills' defence began to look more stable, though they had to make some desperate clearances. They rarely looked like giving way, to such an extent that Templeman, Wilkinson, Lawton, Dawson and Armstrong all resorted to taking long-range shots which gave 'keeper John Simpson little trouble.

Bill Williams was again the strong man of the defence with David Quirke, relentlessly tough and refusing to budge an inch, an able companion.

The last chance of the first half went to Woodley who had an excellent opportunity after Riddick had picked up a Smillie free-kick, but the ball bounced slightly too far for the winger and he could only tap the ball weakly forward.

Their best break so far came early in the second period when Woodley, in a preview to Gillingham's two goals, made a sudden burst down the wing following a good headed clearance by Quirke.

The winger slipped the ball past Templeman, leaving no-one in front of him except Yeo and John Napier, but he allowed the home defence to catch up and was finally robbed by a challenge from Templeman and Turner.

At this point Gillingham seemed to have withstood the best Brighton could throw at them. The home side's enthusiasm waned dramatically and the penalty miss after 60 minutes just about finished them off.

Gillingham took over and had two chances to take the lead when Woodley pulled his cross back too far with the Brighton rearguard in a tangle, and later when Riddick carelessly wasted a good pass from the winger.

Brighton: Powney, Henderson, Templeman, Wilkinson, J. Napier, Turner, K. Napier, Lawton, Dawson, Spearrit (Gall), Armstrong.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Machin.

Attendance: 11,749.

EDDIE SPEARRITT makes a dash along the wing.

GILLINGHAM Youth Team, who beat Colchester Youth 3-2 in the South East Counties League at Priestfield Stadium with a hat-trick by David Peach.

Victory finale at Priestfield?

FREDDIE COX, former Gillingham manager, will bring a give-nothing-away Bournemouth side to Priestfield Stadium tonight for the Gills' last home game of the season.

BY JOHN WINTER

It is a match that could make or break the Gillingham fight against relegation and is expected to be physically tough, as the matches between these two sides nearly always are. There will be no old pals act here!

High-placed Bournemouth are a team who work and tackle fast and Gillingham will have to go all out to gain a long overdue win against them—they won in five encounters.

"They have their weaknesses like any club and it is up to us to find them on the night," said Gillingham manager Basil Hayward today. His team, unlikely to be changed, will be selected from the 12 who went to Brighton.

A win tonight will see Gillingham almost well home and dry. Both Crewe and Oldham will go down, barring a miracle.

Mr. Hayward added: "If we can get two points tonight Orient will have to play well against Bournemouth (away) and Shrewsbury (home) to pick up the four points they will be behind us."

If Shrewsbury lose at Orient then their own fight to escape will receive a setback.

"The lads have done well enough in the last few weeks to help themselves, but unfortunately other clubs have not been helping us too much!" says Basil.

Gillingham will be selected from J. Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith, Machin.

● Picture and report coverage in full in tomorrow's Post.

● The Gillingham Youth team also have a game this evening against Queen's Park Rangers at the Garrison Ground, Brompton, kick-off 6 p.m. They will be looking for a reversal of the 8-0 hammering they received earlier this month.

GILLINGHAM Past v Gillingham Present. Manager Cox v Manager Hayward as the Gills seek to break a poor run against Bournemouth tonight.

'Still need two or three points'

TWO vital points from Goldstone Road on Saturday pushed Gillingham further away from the relegation zone, and the week-end results now finds no fewer than nine clubs involved in the anti-relegation stakes.

But although Gillingham would now appear to be much safer manager Basil Hayward said yesterday (Monday) that relegation was "still on" for the club, although this week would almost certainly sort things out.

"We still need two or three points to escape the danger zone but tonight's matches involving Barrow, Crewe, Hartlepool and Orient will have a telling effect.

"It is still tough going as Saturday's games did not go too well for us and clubs are still niggling at us. Had we lost at Brighton we could have found ourselves in dire trouble," said Mr. Hayward.

Commenting on Saturday's fine performance in obtaining two points from Brighton, the Gills' boss said: "We played reasonably well in the first half, but after the break we played as we really can and we were not in a great deal of danger.

"Had Brighton converted the penalty, which I thought was rather harsh, then we might have found ourselves in trouble," he added.

VASTLY IMPROVED

Although Mr. Hayward might be cautious in his remarks about Gillingham's chances of survival, there is no doubt that the two points on Saturday vastly improved the Stadium club's chances of Third Division football next term.

Gillingham boast the best goal average, which must be worth at least a point in some cases, among the bottom eight clubs, while level on points with Gills and a place above are Northampton whose two remaining games are at Barnsley (Friday) and Oldham.

Northampton have slumped into the danger zone after two defeats at the hands of fellow-strugglers Shrewsbury and a 1-0 defeat on Saturday against bottom-of-the-table Crewe.

In addition to last night's matches that involved lowly-placed clubs, Barrow visit Reading tomorrow (Wednesday) and Shrewsbury are at home to Torquay the same night. Orient and Shrewsbury will clash at Brisbane Road on Friday.

But Gillingham have a great chance to further increase their safety margin tonight when they meet Bournemouth at Priestfield Stadium in the last home match of the season.

However, a pointer to the result of this match might be gauged from the goalless draws between the two clubs in the last two seasons.

But a Gillingham win against "The Cherries," managed by former Gills' boss Freddie Cox, is long overdue and would be an end-of-season boost for supporters. In addition to the goalless draws at the Stadium, Gillingham have crashed 2-0, 4-0 and 1-0 at Bournemouth in that order.

With the exception of one or two bruises, there are no injury problems at the Stadium after the Brighton visit and Mr. Hayward said yesterday that the same 12 players would face Bournemouth.

They are: Simpson; Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith, Machin.

Tonight, kick-off 6-30 p.m., the Youths will meet Q.P.R. at the Garrison Ground in a South East Counties League fixture, and the Reserves, who visited Luton last night, take on Bristol City at the Stadium on Thursday night.

Bournemouth boss Mr. Cox said yesterday (Monday) he has had six men on the injured list for the past ten days and will not pick his team until they get to Gillingham.

He will therefore probably be bringing 14 players with him and these include the three men he took from Gillingham to Bournemouth — defence stalwarts Ralph Miller, David Stocks and Jimmy White.

The others are England youth international goalkeeper, Roger Jones, Ray Bumstead, Chris Foote, Tom Naylor, Ron Bolton, Keith East, Tony Powell, Ken Pound, Denis Longhorn and Lou Peters.

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	32	27	10	6	71	26	64
Swindon	43	25	9	9	67	34	59
Luton	44	23	11	10	68	36	57
Plymouth	45	17	15	13	53	48	49
Bournemouth	43	20	8	15	59	44	48
Torquay	43	18	11	14	52	42	47
Tranmere	44	18	10	16	69	67	46
Brighton	46	16	13	17	72	65	45
Stockport	43	15	14	14	65	62	44
Walsall	45	14	16	15	49	47	44
Southport	42	16	11	15	62	54	43
Reading	45	15	13	17	67	65	43
Bristol R	44	16	11	17	63	65	43
Rotherham	44	15	12	17	53	49	42
Barnsley	43	13	14	16	51	60	40
Northampton	44	14	11	19	52	58	39
GILLINGHAM	43	13	13	17	51	58	39
Barrow	42	15	8	19	52	72	38
Orient	43	12	13	18	46	58	37
Hartlepool	43	10	17	16	40	69	37
Shrewsbury	41	13	10	18	42	60	36
Mansfield	40	12	11	17	50	58	35
Oldham Ath	45	13	8	24	49	82	34
Crewe	42	12	7	23	45	68	31

Not including last night's matches

Hold back to face Gillingham

BOURNEMOUTH will be without Terry Gulliver, who is under suspension but have centre-forward John Hold fit after injury for tonight's game.

Team from: Jones, Foote, Miller, Naylor, Stocks, J. White, Bolton, Hold, Pound, East, Powell, Bumstead.

Miller, Stocks and White are all former Gillingham players.

Safety levels

THIS table shows how many points each club can get at the lower end of the Third Division assuming they win each match remaining. We also give the current goal averages. The bottom four go down.

	To play	Goals	Max
North'pton	2	52-58	43
Gillingh'm	3	51-58	45
Orient	2	46-58	42
Hartlepool	2	40-69	42
Shrewsbury	5	42-60	46
Mansfield	6	50-58	47
Oldham	1	49-82	36
Crewe	3	48-71	38

Can Machin win back his place?

MEL MACHIN, the Gillingham wing-half, who hasn't turned out since April 9, plays for the Reserves tonight in their Football Combination match against Bristol City at Priestfield Stadium (kick-off 7.30).

A good performance might win back his first team place for the last two games of the season, for the Gills are bound to need their best defensive players as they fight for the vital extra points.

Shrewsbury's good form continues and with four games still to play, including the last one at home to Gillingham, they must stand a fair chance of escaping the drop. Last night they beat Torquay by a single goal.

Gillingham are having no special practice matches or training to keep them in trim before next Wednesday's match at Crewe and will stick to the normal *programme.*

Gillingham Reserves team tonight: Bellotti, Hibbins, Simmons, Machin, Arnott, Bailey, Osborn, Bray, Folds, Peach, Tydeman. Sub: Chapman.

Ineffective finishing robs Gills of victory

A high flying Brian Yeo beats Bournemouth 'keeper Roger Jones to a Derek Woodley cross on Tuesday night but was high and over with his header. Below, Jones leaps above defenders to collect a dangerous cross on the goal-line. R.1814, R.1815

GILLINGHAM 0, BOURNEMOUTH 0

This display on Tuesday night was certainly not the sort of thing Gillingham could have wanted to serve up before an above-average crowd as they bowed out of their home League programme, writes **Murray Evans.**

From beginning to end it rarely looked like finishing anything but as goalless as the last two Priestfield Stadium encounters between the two clubs.

Gillingham, thankful for a point but obviously disappointed at not getting two to finally banish all thoughts of relegation, were as ineffective at the front as they have been for many a match.

Bournemouth, who came for a point, showed a sturdy defence which was panicky early on but had little trouble containing a weak Gills attack.

Brian Yeo and Carl Gilbert were about as sharp as a wooden sword and consequently Gillingham's best efforts came from their three midfield prompters - Andy Smillie, John Meredith and Gordon Riddick.

They also looked for support from winger Derek Woodley, who seemed to be conserving his energy for a final defence-shattering burst down the wing to make Gillingham's winning goal and emulate his performance at Brighton on Saturday. But he was still conserving it when the final whistle blew.

But though Gillingham offered little enterprise in attack they rarely looked suspect at the back.

BEST GAME

Weston, Quirke and Williams all played well up to standard and Mike Green, supported at times by John Meredith, had his best game for some time.

John Simpson dealt comfortably with whatever came his way but had little to do, thanks to Bournemouth's concentration on defence.

Both teams took some time to find their feet as a pre-match shower caused ball and players alike to go skidding across the surface.

Gillingham were threatening with their place kicks, with Bill Williams causing some panic when he went up for corners and for two tantalising free-kicks which Mike Green floated over. From another free kick taken by Woodley the ball just eluded Yeo's head and the ball rebounded to Smillie whose snap shot scraped the bar.

For a time the visitors' back row seemed remarkably shaky and even youth international 'keeper, Roger Jones, looked uncertain. Brian Yeo beat him with a neat header from another Woodley free kick but the ball went inches over.

The nearest Bournemouth came to a goal was when Bill Williams fluffed a short back pass. Ken Pound came bustling in and John Simpson had to dive at his feet to save. Apart from that the best Bournemouth could muster was a few long-range efforts, all of which were off target.

Gilbert and Yeo's bungling of chances was shown up well by John Meredith who sent a first-time shot only fractionally wide after the pair had lost the ball between them on the edge of the area.

Gillingham's first real display of good attacking football came from a simple move set up by Riddick. The Gills skipper pushed the ball for for Brian Yeo to turn brilliantly and lift the ball past Jones, only to see it go wide of the far post.

Gillingham's hardest workers were undoubtedly John Meredith and Andy Smillie, who together laid on Gills' last chance of the half. From Meredith's hard centre Brian Yeo failed once more and Bournemouth half-back Tom Naylor put the ball over for a corner.

Bournemouth might have taken the lead early in the second half when substitute Tony Powell, who came on at the break for John Hold, ran between Green and Quirke. But with East waiting in the middle he crossed far too hard and the chance was lost.

Brian Yeo had another opportunity to set the game alight shortly afterwards. Quirke took a free-kick from the centre circle, Gilbert headed on and Yeo turned well but could not shrug off a tackle from Naylor and his weak shot was comfortably saved.

Gilbert and Yeo might have had better chances of beating the visitors' defence had Gillingham been a bit quicker in taking their throws and free-kicks. Instead they deliberated far too long and allowed Bournemouth to re-form at the back.

Gordon Riddick went close with a shot from 25 yards after a Smillie-Yeo build-up, although Jones seemed to have it covered.

REAL TANGLE

The Gills' back row, which had become so used to propping up the attack, found itself in a real tangle when the time came for them to do some more defensive work.

As everyone dithered Ken Pound sent in a shot which 'keeper John Simpson saved with his foot and East followed up to shoot well over.

Bournemouth immediately came back when Bolton switched the ball inside to ex-Gills' skipper Jimmy White, whose shot was tipped over by Simpson.

But it should still have been Gillingham's game. Smillie showed the way chances should be taken when, after Yeo had pulled the ball back for him, he side-stepped one tackle before sending a shot curling towards the net. The ball looked set for a goal until Jones made a brilliant diving save.

Gordon Riddick wasted some good chances of sending Gillingham quickly forward but did set one up for Woodley in Gillingham's last real effort. This time Bournemouth full-back Ray Bumstead headed the winger's cross over his own bar.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. Sub: Machin.

Bournemouth: Jones, Bumstead, Miller, Naylor, Stocks, White, Foote, Pound, East, Hold (Powell), Bolton.

Attendance: 6,615.

Brian Yeo in full flight as he leaps over Bournemouth 'keeper Roger Jones, who has collected the ball and is covered by a colleague. R. 1816.

Cobblers hold key

GILLINGHAM could go to Crewe tomorrow free of relegation worries. It all depends on Northampton, who play their last game of the season at Oldham tonight and need a point to go above the Medway side on goal average.

If Northampton lose—and they have had a very unsuccessful run lately—then Gillingham will be safe, for Crewe and Oldham are already booked for the Fourth Division and *Hartlepool* cannot overtake the Gills even if they win their last match of the season at home to Crewe. Hartlepool have a very inferior goal average.

Worry

A drawn game at Oldham will be enough to cause Gillingham worry, for their goal average (.8793) is worse than that of Northampton (.8833), and they will therefore have to get a point or several goals to overtake *them*. If Northampton win then the Gills will need two points from their last two games to be sure of finishing above them.

Shrewsbury, Gillingham's final opponents of the season on May 5, were thrashed 4-0 by Orient last night—a win that takes Orient clear of trouble.

Mel Machin turns out for Gillingham Reserves in their last match of the season at home to Football Combination leaders Arsenal Reserves at Priestfield Stadium tonight (kick-off 7.30).

The side is the same as that which beat Bristol City Reserves last week.

Arsenal have already won the Combination and lost only one game in so doing. They field their usual team with the exception of regular keeper Webster, who is on tour with England Youth.

Gillingham: Belotti, Ribbins, Simmons, Machin, Arnott, Bailey, Osbourn, Bray, Folds, Peach, Tydeman. Sub.: Knight.

Arsenal: Johnson, Rice, Nelson, Woodward, Carmichael, Kelly, Cumming, Davidson, George, Johnston, Kennedy. Sub.: Davies.

A point will do, Gills!

AN unchanged Gillingham team go to Crewe today knowing they stand a better chance of getting the point they need to escape relegation than they do in the last match of the season at Shrewsbury.

Oldham did the Gills a *bad turn last night* by giving Northampton a point with a silly own goal four minutes from the end.

Had Northampton lost Gillingham would have been safe, but now they are level on points and the Medway side have an inferior goal average—by .006!

BY JOHN WINTER

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward, disappointed with the Oldham result, said before leaving for Crewe: "We are going for all we can get tonight. No one has helped us so we must help ourselves."

There was probably as much interest in the Lancashire match in the Medway Towns last night as there was at Oldham, where only 2,089 fans saw the game.

Directors at Priestfield Stadium were in touch with the Oldham ground by phone, and in many homes ears were turned to the radio for the late night soccer results.

The Gillingham team tonight is J. Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith. *Sub.: Machin.*

Bottom of the table line-up:

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Northampton	46	9	8	6	37	30	5	4	14	17	31	40
Gillingham	**44**	**10**	**10**	**3**	**35**	**20**	**3**	**4**	**14**	**16**	**38**	**40**
Mansfield	43	13	5	3	33	16	1	6	15	20	44	39
Shrewsbury	43	10	7	4	22	15	4	3	15	21	49	38
Hartlepools	45	6	11	5	25	29	4	7	12	15	41	33
Oldham	46	9	6	8	33	27	4	3	16	17	56	35
Crewe	44	10	4	8	36	29	2	4	16	12	45	32

GILLINGHAM Roll call

Aug.	10	Tranmere	A	0—2		
	14	ORIENT*	H	2—2	5,938	Quirke (2)
	17	ORIENT	H	2—2	5,524	Woodley, T. Simpson
	20	Orient*	A	0—3		
	24	Barnsley	A	1—3		Gibbs
	27	Rotherham	A	0—1		
	31	LUTON	H	1—3	8,227	Williams
Sept.	7	Torquay	A	0—2		
	14	BRIGHTON	H	5—0	4,445	Gilbert (2), Yeo (2), Woodley
	16	Barrow	A	1—2		Yeo
	20	Southport	A	2—4		Yeo, Woodley
	28	MANSFIELD	H	1—1	4,630	Woodley
Oct.	4	Reading	A	2—3		Yeo (2)
	9	ROTHERHAM	H	2—0	5,525	Gilbert, Yeo
	12	STOCKPORT	H	0—0	5,314	
	19	Bristol Rovers	A	1—5		Riddick
	26	PLYMOUTH	H	1—0	5,170	Riddick
Nov.	2	Watford	A	1—2		T. Simpson
	5	Northampton	A	1—0		Yeo
	9	WALSALL	H	4—0	4,857	Smillie, Yeo (2), Riddick
	16	Orient'	A	1—1		Smillie
	20	ORIENT'	H	2—1	9,563	Riddick (2)
	23	*SHREWSBURY*	*H*	*4—1*	*5,270*	*Riddick*, Simpson, Yeo, Machin (pen.)
	30	Bournemouth	A	0—2		
Dec.	7	Luton'	A	1—3		Yeo
	13	Stockport	A	0—5		
	21	BRISTOL R.	H	0—2		
	26	READING	H	2—2	4,692	Yeo (2)
	28	Plymouth	A	1—1		Riddick
Jan.	*11*	*WATFORD*	*H*	*0—5*	*6,641*	
	25	N'HAMPTON	H	2—0	4,532	Yeo, Woodley
	28	Walsall	A	1—2		Yeo (pen.)
Feb.	1	HARTLEPOOL	H	2—2	4,785	T. Simpson, Woodley
	25	Swindon	A	0—1		
Mar.	1	TRANMERE	H	1—1	3,860	Gilbert
	3	Orient	A	1—1		Gilbert
	5	SWINDON	H	2—0	6,104	Riddick, Gilbert
	10	Hartlepool	A	1—1		*Riddick*
	14	BARNSLEY	H	1—1	5,961	Riddick
	22	Luton	A	1—1		Yeo
	26	CREWE	H	1—0	5,072	Yeo
	29	TORQUAY	H	0—0	6,200	
Apl.	4	Oldham	A	0—1		
	5	Mansfield	A	0—2		
	7	BARROW	H	2—0		Gilbert (2)
	12	SOUTHPORT	H	0—0	4,516	
	16	OLDHAM	H	2—0	5,736	Williams (2)
	19	*Brighton*	*A*	*2—0*		Gilbert, Smillie
	22	BOURNEM'TH	H	0—0	6,615	
	30	Crewe	A			
May	5	Shrewsbury	A			

* League Cup ' F.A. Cup

Appearances to date, including League and FA Cups: Bailey 23 and 3 as sub; *Bellotti 23; Folds 3* and 1 as sub; Gibbs 7; Gilbert 19 and 1 as sub; Green 45; Machin 33; Meredith 45; Osborne 1; Quirke 26 and 5 as sub; Riddick 43 and 1 as sub; J. Simpson 24; T. Simpson 35 and 2 as sub; Smillie 25; Thear 3; Weston 30; Williams 46; Woodley 45; Yeo *39*.

Goalscorers: Yeo 16, Riddick 10, Gilbert 9, Woodley 6, T. Simpson 4, Williams 3, Smillie 3, Quirke 2, Machin 1, Gibbs 1.

Record (including League and FA Cups): P 49, W 14, D 16, L 19, goals for 57, against 71.

Where the Gills are

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Watford	44	27	10	7	73	29	64
Swindon T.	44	26	9	9	68	34	61
Luton T.	44	23	11	10	68	36	57
Bournemouth	44	208	9	15	59	44	49
Plymouth	45	17	15	13	53	48	49
Torquay	44	18	11	15	52	43	47
Southport	44	17	12	15	68	57	46
Stockport	44	16	14	14	66	62	46
Tranmere	45	18	10	17	69	68	46
Brighton	46	16	13	17	72	65	45
Walsall	45	14	16	15	49	47	44
Reading	46	15	13	18	67	68	43
Bristol R.	46	16	11	19	63	71	43
Rotherham	44	15	12	17	52	49	42
Barnsley	44	14	14	16	54	62	42
Barrow	44	17	8	19	56	72	42
GILLINGHAM	44	13	14	17	51	58	40
Northampton	44	14	11	19	52	58	39
Orient	44	12	14	18	46	56	38
Shrewsbury	42	14	10	18	43	60	38
Hartlepool	44	10	18	16	40	69	38
Mansfield	41	12	11	18	50	56	35
Oldham Ath	45	13	8	24	49	82	34
Crewe	43	12	8	23	48	71	32

Not including last nights results

FOOTBALL COMBINATION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	23	18	4	1	66	15	40
Fulham	25	18	4	3	76	32	40
Tottenham	25	17	3	5	69	26	37
Ipswich T.	24	15	5	4	62	32	35
Crystal P.	25	16	3	6	47	31	35
West Ham	25	9	13	3	42	28	31
Southampton	24	11	5	8	36	19	27
Bristol C.	24	12	3	9	44	34	27
GILLINGHAM	23	10	5	8	24	27	25
Walsall	25	9	6	10	41	38	24
Peterborough	25	7	10	8	32	36	24
Cardiff C.	25	9	6	10	31	38	24
Leicester	24	9	5	10	34	30	23
Q P R.	25	8	7	10	39	45	23
Chelsea	24	9	4	11	42	40	22
Plymouth	25	6	9	10	23	37	21
Bournemouth	25	6	9	10	33	40	21
Bristol R.	25	8	5	12	39	54	21
Luton T.	24	6	9	9	27	40	21
Birmingham	25	7	6	12	36	37	20
Norwich	24	6	8	10	41	46	20
Oxford U.	23	7	4	12	25	46	18
Swindon T.	25	6	4	15	17	41	16
Swansea T.	22	4	6	12	25	48	14
Northampton	25	5	3	17	27	59	13
Reading	25	4	4	17	24	[illegible]	12

Gills are still on tenterhooks

DESPITE their excellent run since the beginning of March in which they have taken 18 points from 15 games—including the last five without conceding a goal—Gillingham are still troubled by relegation fears.

Manager Basil Hayward said before the *run started* that the Gills wanted a point a game to survive, and though they have more than achieved this the success of their nine fellow strugglers has made life difficult for them.

Since the game with Bournemouth last Tuesday they *have* had an unpleasant wait before their game at Crewe on Wednesday and have been carefully watching the other results.

Orient managed a surprise Friday night win at Bournemouth which caused Mr. Hayward to comment today: "We cannot rely on *any* of the other teams to get us out of *trouble and* will be going to Crewe with two points in mind."

Crewe, along with Oldham, are already doomed to Fourth Division football next season, but Mr. Hayward feels that this fact will make them play all the better. It should take the *pressure* from their play, but the players *will* still have an incentive to get their names on the retained list.

A most important fixture tonight is Orient v Shrewsbury which could create even more uncertain[illegible]

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE

Millwall	31	25	4	2	124	35	54
Ipswich T.	28	21	6	1	85	27	48
Orient	27	20	6	1	84	34	46
Charlton	29	17	7	5	73	30	41
Q P R.	32	16	5	11	72	53	37
Crystal P.	30	17	1	12	76	57	35
West Ham	31	11	8	12	58	61	30
Tottenham	29	13	3	13	79	42	29
Colchester	29	11	3	15	40	69	25
Chelsea	28	11	2	15	66	63	24
Fulham	28	10	4	14	38	48	24
Luton T.	29	7	8	14	47	63	22
Reading	31	8	6	17	43	84	22
Watford	30	6	3	18	44	85	21
Brighton	30	6	4	20	46	70	16
GILLINGHAM	28	6	2	18	27	67	14
Oxford U.	28	2	4	22	15	67	8

GILLS' GRIM TASK

THE crunch has arrived for Gillingham as they struggle to escape the clutches of relegation. Following their disastrous defeat at Crewe on Wednesday, they face a "sudden death" match at Shrewsbury on Monday in the last game of the season, writes **TERRY BOWLES.**

Crewe, together with Oldham and Hartlepool, are already doomed to Division Four and Gills' manager Basil Hayward feels that they played on Wednesday with no pressures and this is what made the difference. After going six home games without a win they produce most unexpected form and were four goals up before Gills knew what had hit them.

That makes it three down with one more unwanted spot still to be decided. Northampton have already completed their fixtures and now have to sweat it out on 40 points, the same as Gills but with a superior goal average.

Shrewsbury have three games left, at home to Southport tonight, Gillingham on Monday and away to Mansfield next Friday. A win tonight will mean they will join the others on 40 points but even a double figure win will not make their goal average better than Gillingham's.

If this happens then naturally a draw will satisfy both teams. Mr. Hayward, who travels to Shrewsbury this *afternoon* to see the game, summed it up by saying today, "If Harry Gregg's boys get two points tonight then on Monday, he will be hoping that we cannot shoot as I will be hoping they can't."

If they should lose or draw with Southport then they will be left in a desperate plight for points on Monday, as they cannot guarantee coming away from Mansfield with anything to increase their tally.

Gillingham have only one injury to report and that is *leading scorer Brian Yeo*, who returned from Crewe with knee trouble. He is however included in the party of 13 to travel.

The others are Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith, Machin and much improved forward Bobby Folds.

This will be one of the most vital games in the history of Gillingham. They have done well in recent weeks, but despite this, still find themselves thwarted by the relegation fears which they have found impossible to shrug off.

It was a long hard struggle to gain the "senior" status of Division Three and they now purely and simply must get one point from Shrewsbury if they are to retain it.

Now Gills play a waiting game

GILLINGHAM, after taking three points from Brighton and Bournemouth in four days, now sit back and wait while clubs below them fight out vital relegation battles tonight (Friday), Monday and Tuesday.

The Gills have no match in their bid to avoid the "drop" until they travel to Cheshire on Wednesday to meet bottom-of-the-table Crewe. But before then Northampton, Orient, Shrewsbury, Oldham, Mansfield and Crewe are involved in vital matches.

Hartlepool played last night (Thursday) at Tranmere, but although both Oldham Athletic are already doomed and Crewe look likely to accompany them to Division Four the remaining two candidates are anyone's guess.

Although Gillingham have had an exceptional run since the start of the year, losing only five of their 20 matches, the turning point in their favour undoubtedly came with Saturday's 2-0 victory at Brighton. Defeat at Goldstone Road followed by just one point *against* Bournemouth on Tuesday night would have put them in a very precarious position.

FINE TRIBUTE

As it is Gillingham now find themselves eighth from bottom and for most of the clubs their superior goal average is worth a point — a fine tribute to the Gills' defence and the goalkeeping of veteran John Simpson, who has conceded only 21 goals in 22 matches since returning to the first team squad on Boxing Day. Five of the goals were conceded in the home clash with Watford in January.

Barrow, with 3-0 and 1-0 successes against Bristol Rovers and Reading respectively in midweek, have lifted themselves above Gillingham in the table and would now appear safe on the 42 points mark.

Two points below lie Gillingham and it is interesting to note that not since May 1963 has a club been relegated with a total of 40 points. Then it happened to Bradford who went down on goal average from Reading.

There are so many ifs and buts, but should two results go well last night (Thursday) and tonight — then Gillingham would appear safe because of their better goal average.

These matches were Hartlepool's visit to Tranmere and Orient's trip to Bournemouth (tonight). Shoud Hartlepool and Orient lose then they find themselves two points behind Gillingham with an inferior goal average and just one match to play.

In addition to these clubs there is Northampton who lie just one point below Gillingham and whose two remaining maches, like the Gills, are away from home — *Barnsley tonight* and Oldham on Tuesday.

But while both Shrewsbury and Mansfield would appear to be in a good position to escape the drop because of their matches in hand, it is interesting to note that Shrewsbury have to make visits to Mansfield and Orient.

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward said yesterday that the few days off would give extra time for injuries, bruises, aches and pains to clear up, and leave the onus on other clubs in the relegation fight.

"The fight at the bottom is so tough that anything can happen. Results in the past week have not helped us and it is a case of having to help yourself.

"By the time we travel to Crewe on Wednesday we will have a much clearer picture," he added.

Remaining fixtures are: **GILLINGHAM**: 30 April, Crewe (A); 5 May, Shrewsbury (A); **NORTHAMPTON**: Tonight, Barnsley (A), 29 April, Oldham (A); **ORIENT**: Tonight, Bournemouth (A); 28 April, Shrewsbury (H); **HARTLEPOOL**: 5 May, Crewe (H).

SHREWSBURY: 28 April, Orient (A); 2 May, Southport (H), 5 May, Gillingham (H), 9 May, Mansfield (A); **MANSFIELD**: Tonight, Walsall (H); 30 April, Torquay (A); 5 May, Watfrd (H); 9 May, Shrewsbury (H); **OLDHAM**: 29 April, Northampton (H); **CREWE**: Tonight, Rotherham (A); 30 April, Gillingham (H); 5 May, Hartlepool (A).

The only match at Priestfield Stadium at the week-end will be the Youths' South East Counties League fixture with Colchester United tonight (Friday), kick-off 7.30 p.m.

An attraction at the Stadium on Tuesday night will be the visit of Arsenal Reserves for a Football Combination fixture.

OPPORTUNISM BEATS GILLS

Late goals made no difference

CREWE 4, GILLINGHAM 2

NEEDING a point to make sure of escaping relegation Gillingham never looked like getting one at Crewe on Wednesday. They came back strongly towards the end but by then it was too late to make any difference.

Their Fourth Fivision-bound opponents were catering along with a four-goal lead, and while Gillingham fought pluckily to halve their arrears with goals in the 77th and 88th minutes there was little tangible consolation for them.

It was an occasion when the formbook went by the board. Crewe's inability to strike a consistent scoring standard is the chief reason why they face relegation and it was perhaps surprising that they should suddenly capture that sure *touch* in front of goal against a side which had not conceded a goal in their five previous games and had given away only three in eight matches.

But there was no fluke about it. Crewe's quartet of goals were all superbly executed and *they scored* more than three goals in a match for the first time since August.

Gillingham's struggles began in the 13th. minute. **JOHN INGLIS** fastened on to a pass from Tom Curley and closed in from an angle to drive firmly into the roof of the net with the Gills' defence looking as if they were expecting him to centre.

BRILLIANT EFFORT

Crewe inside right **KEVIN MCHALE** was a persistent source of torment for the Gillingham rearguard and his goal in the 32nd minute was a brilliant effort. He cut through at speed from near the half-way line, took a quick return pass from Inglis and fired in a tremendous drive from the edge of the area.

The ball cannoned against *the post and rolled back along* the line into the opposite corner, but Gillingham 'keeper John Simpson never had a chance to save it.

Crewe were not allowed to take a firm grip on the game and the match was never one-sided.

But Gillingham could not match the opportunism of the home forwards and the best they could manage in the first half was a header by Mike Green from Derek Woodley's free-kick, which Willy Malley fisted over the bar in acrobatic style.

Carl Gilbert was on the mark again when he headed goalwards from Woodley's flag-kick but again Malley saved smartly.

The immaculate **McHALE** pitched Gillingham deeper into trouble in the 54th minute, beating three defenders in a jinking run before pivoting to slam the ball past Simpson from 15 yards.

INGLIS scored the fourth 12 minutes later after Keith Stott and Ivan Hollett had made the opening. He held off a tackle by Mel Machin, a 60th minute substitute for Brian Yeo, as he closed in to shoot past the advancing Simpson.

Gillingham protested that the inside-left had handled in the process but the referee ignored their appeals.

SLACKNESS

Gillingham's late rally provided a rousing conclusion to the game but they were clearly aided by slackness in a Crewe defence who, considering the state of the game, could afford to take risks.

WOODLEY scored the first goal with an angled drive from the right which deceived Malley and flashed into the far corner.

The Crewe 'keeper pushed out a snap drive from John Meredith which was destined for the top corner. Stott headed off the line from Andy Smillie before Gordon Riddick put in the second.

Malley was again at fault, failing to cut out a centre from Gilbert, and leaving **RIDDICK** with a simple chance to head into the net.

Crewe: Malley, Gater, Leigh, Stott, Foster, Gannon, Curley, McHale, Hollett, Inglis, Bradshaw, Sub. Arnold.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo (Machin), *Gilbert, Smillie*, Meredith.

Attendance: 2,636.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

Hard fight is still on

THREE points from our last two matches — Brighton (Saturday) and Bournemouth (Tuesday) — have lifted us further away from the danger zone. But at the same time we are not clear because other relegation —threatened clubs have also picked up points.

But the players have proved during the last two months that they have confidence in their ability and in themselves to avoid the drop to a lower league status, although the fight is far from over and pressure is still on them.

Now they can sit back for a few days' deserved rest. Our next fixture is on Wednesday night at Crewe but I am hoping that before then we will have a clearer picture of the bottom-of-the-table zone and who are seriously threatened.

As I have said before, I would like to see Gillingham in the position of being free of relegation before the trip to Crewe. Matches involving threatened clubs take place tonight (Friday), Monday and Tuesday, so we might possibly be clear before travelling to Cheshire on Wednesday.

EXCEPTIONAL

Our last 16 league matches have produced only two defeats and this exceptional run should have seen us right out of the relegation race. But the football in the division is so even that the other clubs have kept the pressure on us.

Make no mistake it has been a very hard fight, and it is still on.

The gate of nearly 7,000 for the Bournemouth visit on Tuesday was very encouraging and I think the majority of supporters now appreciate the amount of effort and skill the players put into their game.

While next season is a long way off and we have problems with the present season, I think that the last few weeks have been a pointer to what we are capable of and that the crowd are right behind the team.

The players must have the utmost belief in themselves and get down quickly to the hard basics of the game. When they do not dream about what they can do, but instead go out and put it into effect, then we shall have a good side.

They have always been capable of being a good side but if the club is to be a success then they must have the full backing of everything that is associated with Gillingham F.C.

Next season will provide a hectic start to the programme because the F.A. Cup has been brought forward a fortnight, due to the World Cup in Mexico and the Home Internationals.

The only drawback for us is that we are also pitched into the Football League Cup and the opening weeks can be very hard, without having additional midweek League fixtures.

Every small club looks for a good run in the F.A. or Football League Cups, and I would prefer to see the latter competition start a few weeks later than the opening week of the season to enable teams to settle down.

Our performance at Brighton on Saturday to pick up both points was exceptional. The first half saw us play the ball inaccurately which brought pressure to bear on the defence, but in the second period I thought the team's play improved considerably and we always had an extra man in the Brighton penalty area.

Bournemouth, as was to be expected, was a hard slog. We looked for an early goal but although the chances were created, we were not sharp enough to take advantage of them

Finally a word about our youth policy. Readers will have noticed throughout the season that more local boys have been making appearances in the South East Counties' team this term.

The youth process starts much earlier now than it used to and in the past any young players with ability in Kent used to go to other clubs rather than come to Gillingham.

I am pleased to see now that a greater interest is being shown in the club and this is borne out by the number of youngsters who have made youth appearances and played the occasional Football Combination match.

Gay Meadow point is a must

GILLINGHAM'S position in Division Three is perilous to say the least after Wednesday night's shattering 4-2 defeat at the hands of Crewe, who are already doomed to Division Four football next season.

Trailing by four goals midway through the second half Gillingham, who had not conceded a goal in their last five matches, were rocked right back on their heels and their last ditch bid to pull back two goals only lightened the scoreline.

But it was ironic that this vital relegation battle for the Stadium Club happened on the fifth anniversary they won the Division Four championship at Newport on 30 April, 1964.

This time last week Gillingham were in a favourable position of avoiding the drop, but vital fixtures involving other relegation-threatened clubs saw the results go against the Gills.

Now everything is centred on Shrewsbury Town. The Salopians take on Southport at Gay Meadow tonight (Friday) and victory here for Shrewsbury would put them on level points with Gillingham, but with an inferior goal average.

This would mean that Gillingham must take a point from Monday's trip to Shrewsbury if they hope to retain Division Three status next term. A point would take them safely above Northampton who also have 40 points but a better goal average.

Should Shrewsbury lose to Southport and beat Gillingham, then the Stadium club would have to wait until the following Friday evening to know if they were safe as everything would hinge on the result of Shrewsbury's visit to Mansfield.

Gillingham's most recent troubles started last Friday night with Orient's unexpected 1-0 success at Bournemouth. This was followed by Northampton's 1-1 draw at Oldham which lifted the Cobblers above the Gills on goal average.

Mansfield lifted themselves clear of the relegation zone with two midweek victories against Plymouth (1-0) and Torquay by the same score on Wednesday.

LEAN SPELL

So the visit to Shropshire on Monday is a vital one. Shrewsbury went through a lean spell, including a 4-1 hiding at Priestfield Stadium in November, but they have hit back at the right time and victories at Northampton and Reading in succession pulled them away from the bottom spot.

Last season Shrewsbury, who were just pipped for promotion, won their last game of the season 1-0 at Gillingham after losing 2-1 to the Gills only a few weeks earlier.

The Supporters' Association are hoping that Gillingham will have a following at Shrewsbury on Monday. The Gordon Road office will be open today (Friday) and tomorrow to deal with enquiries.

The office will be open tonight from 7-30 to 9, and tomorrow from 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Young Edward Richmond of Toronto Road, Gillingham, receives a soccer book from Blue and Whites' secretary-treasurer, Mr. Eddie Dodge, on Tuesday, for being the Association's top sales boy during the season. K.1947

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	45	27	10	8	74	35	64
Swindon T.	44	26	9	9	68	34	61
Luton T.	46	25	11	10	74	38	61
Bournemouth	46	21	9	16	69	45	51
Plymouth	46	17	15	14	53	49	49
Tranmere	46	19	10	17	70	68	48
Torquay	45	18	11	16	52	44	47
Southport	44	17	12	15	68	57	46
Stockport	46	16	14	16	67	68	46
Barnsley	46	16	14	16	58	63	46
Brighton	46	16	13	17	72	65	45
Rotherham	45	16	12	17	55	49	44
Walsall	46	14	16	16	50	49	44
Reading	46	15	13	18	67	66	43
Bristol R.	46	16	11	19	63	71	43
Orient	46	14	14	18	51	58	42
Barrow	45	17	8	20	56	73	42
Mansfield	44	15	11	18	54	60	41
Northampton	46	14	12	20	54	61	40
GILLINGHAM	45	13	14	18	53	62	40
Shrewsbury	43	14	10	19	43	66	38
Hartlepool	45	10	18	17	40	70	38
Oldham A.	46	13	9	24	50	92	35
Crewe	45	13	8	24	52	76	34

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Millwall	32	26	4	2	126	35	56
Ipswich	32	24	7	1	98	31	55
Orient	32	24	7	1	96	36	55
Charlton	32	20	7	5	81	40	47
Q.P.R.	32	16	5	11	72	53	37
Crystal P.	32	17	3	12	78	69	37
Tottenham	32	14	4	14	82	47	32
Chelsea	32	13	4	15	79	65	30
West Ham	32	11	8	13	58	67	30
Fulham	32	10	5	17	40	58	25
Colchester	32	11	3	18	55	99	25
Luton	32	7	9	16	49	68	23
GILLINGHAM	32	9	4	19	36	71	22
Reading	32	8	6	18	45	96	22
Watford	32	9	3	20	44	92	21
Brighton	32	7	4	21	50	84	18
Oxford U.	32	2	5	25	18	96	9

Brown to lead Blue and Whites?

PHIL BROWN, a new member of Gillingham Football Club Blue and Whites' Association Committee, is almost certain to be elected chairman at tomorrow night's annual meeting.

Mr. Brown, who lives in Gillingham, is the only nomination received to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of founder-chairman Harold France.

He has given up the job for persoal reasons.

The meeting will be held at the Livingstone Arms, Livingstone Road, near Priestfield Stadium at 8 p.m. and business should be straightforward, reports secretary Eddie Dodge.

Meanwhile G. S. Russell, of Westmount Avenue, Chatham, who broadcasts Gills' matches to the blind and to local hospitals, writes to the Post praising Mr. France's work.

"It is both essential and relevant to pay tribute to this man for his exceptional and devoted service to the interest of Gillingham F.C. I have been aware of the tremendous application he has given to any task, he has undertaken to assist the club.

No one person has been so ready and willing to devote his time and undoubted ability to an interest as this man. It must be hoped that the future will produce others of Mr. France's calibre and that the example of his long and loyal service will be followed," says Mr. Russell.

A point—or Gills will 'go down'

A DRAW will suit everyone this evening when Shrewsbury entertain Gillingham in a match that could send the Medway club crashing into the Fourth Division, writes **JOHN WINTER**.

Everyone that is, except Northampton, who have bitten their nails for six days as they waited to see if two teams could overtake them on points and send them down.

If the form book means anything then Shrewsbury should continue their recent run of home successes and apply the killer blow, but knowing that they need only a point from two games to stay up, the Shropshire side will be unwilling to put too much emphasis on attack which would give the Gills a chance.

Gillingham, needing just the one point from this last game of the season, knew their best chance of survival was if Shrewsbury managed to get two points when they were at home to Southport last Friday.

Had they failed to do so then Shrewsbury would have had to have gone all out for a win tonight. Fortunately they won 5—1 in the match watched by Gillingham manager Basil Hayward.

Shrewsbury play their last game at Mansfield this Friday and will not want to have to get a point there.

Fourth Division football will not go down well at Priestfield Stadium. Apart from the obvious fall in gates — average gate for four seasons before promotion in 1963-64 was 6,229, agerage for the four years after was 7,667 — it will mean a big setback for plans to give the Medway Towns a club with a big future.

"I will lose at least a year, for instead of planning for the Second Division, I will have to start planning for the Third again," said Basil Hayward, who has been plagued all season by lack of financial resources to get players.

Gillingham may have to make a change tonight. Brian Yeo was doubtful at the weekend because of a knee injury and much-improved Bobby Folds is included in the 13 to travel. They are Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Kulrke, Woodley, Yeo, Gilbert, Smillie, Meredith, Machin and Folds.

THE VITAL POSITIONS :

	HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Mansfield	44	13	5	3	33	16	2	6	15	21	44	41
Northampton	46	9	8	6	37	30	5	4	14	17	31	40
Gillingham	**45**	**10**	**10**	**3**	**35**	**20**	**3**	**4**	**15**	**18**	**42**	**40**
Shrewsbury	**44**	**11**	**7**	**4**	**27**	**16**	**4**	**3**	**15**	**21**	**49**	**40**
Hartlepool	45	6	11	5	25	29	4	7	12	15	41	38
Oldham	46	9	6	8	33	27	4	3	16	17	56	35
Crewe	45	11	4	8	40	31	2	4	16	12	45	34

Basil Hayward's Own Column

IN the past week the position at the foot of the Third Division has become much clearer — unfortunately we have clearly fallen into deeper trouble.

Results of the other relegation-threatened clubs and our own defeat at Crewe on Wednesday means just one thing — either we get a point at Shrewsbury on Monday or we go down. That is unless Shrewsbury do something stupid in their other two matches, at home to Southport tonight (Friday) or away to Mansfield. But that would be too much to ask.

With Hartlepools, Oldham and Crewe down it is a simple case of Shrewsbury, Northampton or our selves joining them. By Monday Shrewsbury could be in the same position as Gillingham — just one point needed to escape, in which case both sides would be happy with a draw and Northampton would be relegated.

Concerning Wednesday's match, I do not think the result truly reflected the play. We looked their equals at the beginning but fell two goals behind by half-time through bad breaks in midfield, and Crewe took their chances well.

Early in the second half we lost the ball again in midfield, and once more it ended up being slammed into the net.

OBVIOUS HANDBALL

I brought off Brian Yeo, who took a knock on the knee in the first half, replaced him with Mel Machin, and pushed Gordon Riddick up front.

We disputed Crewe's fourth goal strongly as it was an obvious handball. The linesman put his flag up when the offence occurred, but took it down again when the ball hit the back of the net and the goal stood.

We pulled back two good goals and might have got a couple more, but it was rather late in the game for a revival.

This season Crewe have not been noted for their goal-power. But teams like Crewe are always capable of giving somebody a good hiding at home — even First and Second Division clubs if they get them in the Cup. Unfortunately, they caught us on Wednesday and seriously weakened our goal average.

I am not sure yet who will be fit for Monday's match, for besides Brian Yeo's injury, Ray Bailey also received a knock on the knee in the Reserves' match against Arsenal on Tuesday.

I shall be travelling to Shrewsbury tonight to see them play Southport, but I know already they have improved considerably since we beat them 4—1 at Priestfield Stadium at the end of November.

Every match has been a vital one for us since we hit the relegation zone, and we have made hard work of escaping. Now we have no choice. We have got to help ourselves to a point on Monday or it will be Fourth Division football at the Stadium next season.

Gills grab that point for safety

SHREWSBURY 1, GILLINGHAM 1

BY TERRY BOWLES

GAY MEADOW is the name of the Shrewsbury ground and it could not have been more fitting after last night's game which gave both teams the one point they needed to stay up and left Northampton with the last unwanted ticket to Division Four.

This was no game for faint hearts and contrary to popular opinion that the ball would seldom leave the centre circle with neither side prepared to adventure for fear of what they might lose, it was a thrilling end-to-end game packed with goalmouth incidents.

Gillingham left out Carl Gilbert, with Mel Machin wearing the No. 9 shirt in midfield, and employed Brian Yeo and Derek Woodley as the twin spearhead.

Woodley was in action straight from the kick-off as he jinxed his way through and shot into the side netting. Gills maintained the pressure and before two minutes were up John Meredith drew three men to him near the corner flag before crossing the perfect ball for a diving **Gordon Riddick** to give them the ideal start.

The Gills' skipper should have increased their lead soon after, when Mike Green sent a quick Woodley throw across the face of the goal but Riddick just missed it when only a touch was needed.

Shrewsbury were not allowed to settle by the hard running and keen tackling Gills and only looked dangerous when the ball was played in the air for tall Irish international striker Terry Harkin, who was causing Bill Williams a good deal of concern.

Their build-ups were far too slow against the tightly compact wall of defenders. The visitors looked more likely to score, with their fast direct breakaways and Woodley—often to be found in the inside-left spot—created havoc.

The dashing winger laid on the last real chance of the first period with a short free-kick from which Andy Smillie fully extended Shrewsbury 'keeper John Phillips.

Gillingham found little difficulty in containing Shrewsbury up until the interval but it was a different story afterwards. John Simpson did well to keep out a Graham Clapham drive which hit David Quirke en-route, and it took a tremendous scramble before the now overworked Gills' defence could clear an Alf Wood header that had hit the bar.

Tony Gregory showed the Shrewsbury feeling when he was booked for fouling Simpson in desperation, but this was made even worse when Peter Dolby headed in a Dave Roberts corner and after consulting his linesman, the referee disallowed it.

Gillingham had a great chance to increase their lead when Woodley fought off the buffeting of three players but the ball bounced badly for the unmarked Yeo and Shrewsbury had time to recover.

The defence—brilliantly marshalled by skipper Riddick—looked like holding firm until injury time, when late substitute Denis Hawkins eluded two men on the by-line and centred for the hard-working Trevor Meredith to lay square and the on-rushing **Clapham** crashed in the goal of a lifetime.

A great equaliser which was probably deserved but all credit to the 11 Gillingham heroes who knew what they wanted and set about it in a determined and dedicated fashion—none more so than John Meredith, who will never play a better game in a Gillingham shirt.

Shrewsbury: Phillips; Gregory, Loska, Moore, Dolby, Clapham, Roberts, Wood, Harkin, Meredith, McLaughlin. Sub.: Hawkins.

Gillingham: Simpson, Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Machin, Smillie, Meredith. Sub.: Gilbert.

Attendance: 7,837.

JUST one of Gillingham's moments of anxiety as the ball is scrambled off the line by Tony Weston and goalkeeper John Simpson. Shewsbury's protest that it went over were ignored by the referee.

Gills celebrate with champagne

FIGHTING Gillingham were splendid in their final match of the season at the Gay Meadow, Shrewsbury, on Monday night and clinched the one point that retains Division 3 status for them next season.

The Gills celebrated with champagne after a thrill-a-minute 90 minutes with Shrewsbury who themselves needed just one point to ensure they would avoid the drop.

But Shrewsbury left it late to take their goal. Northampton, who go down with Crewe, Oldham and Hartlepool, were represented at the match by former England wing-half Ron Flowers, and and when he left the ground three minutes from the end he must have thought his club was still in with a chance of survival.

But a goal in injury time robbed Gills of a repeat win at Shrewsbury — a win that they seemed assured of after a fantastic defensive display.

In the first half Gillingham managed comfortably to contain a home attack that was far too laborious in its build-ups.

But the pattern of play after the interval was entirely different. Gillingham had to contend with a constant bombardment of their goal which increased in fury as the minutes ticked away and the necessary point slipped further away from a desperate Shrewsbury.

The defence, with Bill Williams and Gordon Riddick prominent, fought with great tenacity and marked man for man, making it difficult for the eager home forwards to get into proper shooting positions.

Gillingham often had up to ten men crowding their goal area in an attempt to keep Shrewsbury at bay. Indeed, when a Wood header beat Simpson in the 51st minute and was cleared by Weston with Shrewsbury claiming the ball had crossed the line, there were no fewer than six Gills' men on the goal-line.

Numerous shots were scrambled off the line and one great header from Peter Dolby, from a corner, was disallowed because of an infringement on 'keeper John Simpson.

Shrewsbury appealed against the decision and before making it final, referee Nicholson (Manchester) consulted a linesman which was surprising as the referee was obviously far nearer the play.

Shrewsbury almost levelled when John Simpson only just managed to change direction to collect a drive from Graham Clapham which was deflected by David Quirke. And then ten minutes from the end Hawkins, brought on as substitute for Roberts after 75 minutes, found himself unmarked in the area and sent in a stinging shot which struck John Simpson and rebounded to safety.

But though Gillingham still showed the occasional spark of their earlier attacking force — among them a chance laid on by Derek Woodley for Brian

Shrewsbury 1, Gillingham 1

Yeo who was beaten only by a bad bounce — they eventually had to give way to such consistent pressure.

The equalizing goal which had always seemed on the cards came in the very last minute of injury time. Hawkins, policed by no fewer than four defenders on the right wing, slipped the ball square to Wood who pushed it through to Meredith. The striker took it on a yard before pulling it back into the path of GRAHAM CLAPHAM, who sent a great ground shot into the corner of the net.

Supporters streamed onto the pitch to congratulate a tearful Clapham and salute the goal which kept Shrewsbury in the Third Division.

Ninety minutes earlier, however, the tears would have been for a different reason. For with only a minute and 25 seconds of the match gone Gordon Riddick gave Gillingham the perfect start with a great goal.

Derek Woodley, who began the match as Gills' twin striker with Brian Yeo, unsettled Shrewsbury straight from the kick-off with a jinking run which ended with a shot into the side netting.

Gillingham's early flurry was not over and before Shrewsbury had a chance to recover from the first surprise, the Gills rashed in.

John Meredith, who was later to play such a fine game helping out the defence, took the ball to the left-hand corner flag before crossing for a diving GORDON RIDDICK to head home.

The Gills' skipper, whose keen positional sense made him a constant threat to the home defence, should have put his side two up within a few minutes, but he failed to connect with Mike Green's cross.

For the most part Gillingham controlled the middle of the field and kept the Shrewsbury front row well under rein. The only times, in fact, the Gills' defence looked suspect was when long balls were played up the middle to Harkin, who caused Williams more than a little trouble in the air.

Gillingham, with some fast breaks which caught Shrewsbury flat-footed, looked far more likely to increase their lead than Shrewsbury would equalize, and almost added a second goal shortly before half-time.

Derek Woodley, who with John Meredith was outstanding, took a short free-kick from which Andy Smillie got Shrewsbury 'keeper John Phillips at full stretch.

In the second half Gillingham had little choice but to try their best to withstand the Shrewsbury onslaught.

In all, the match produced a fair result, even though Shrewsbury had much more of the attacking play. In a match of great excitement, plenty of good football and high drama as the crowds flocked onto the pitch at the end to mob the players, it would have been unjust if Gillingham had come away empty-handed after such a great fight.

Shrewsbury: Phillips, Gregory, Loska, Moore, Dolby, Clapham, Roberts, Wood, Harkin, Meredith (T), McLaughlin. Sub: Hawkins.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Green, Riddick, Williams, Quirke, Woodley, Yeo, Machin, Smillie, Meredith (J), Sub: GILBERT.

Attendance: 7,837

GILLINGHAM Final roll call

Aug.	10	Tranmere	A	0—2		
	14	ORIENT*	H	2—2	5,988	Quirke (2)
	17	ORIENT	H	2—2	5,524	Woodley T. Simpson
	20	Orient*	A	0—3		
	24	Barnsley	A	1—0		Gibbs
	27	Rotherham	A	0—1		
	31	LUTON	H	1—3	8,227	Williams
Sept.	7	Torquay	A	0—2		
	14	BRIGHTON	H	5—0	4,445	Gilbert (2), Yeo (2), Woodley
	16	Barrow	A	1—2		Yeo
	20	Southport	A	2—4		Yeo, Woodley
	28	MANSFIELD	H	1—1	4,630	Woodley
Oct.	4	Reading	A	2—3		Yeo (2)
	9	ROTHERHAM	H	2—0	5,525	Gilbert, Yeo
	12	STOCKPORT	H	0—0	5,314	
	19	Bristol Rovers	A	1—5		Riddick
	26	PLYMOUTH	H	1—0	5,170	Riddick
Nov.	2	Watford	A	1—2		T. Simpson
	6	Northampton	A	1—0		Yeo
	9	WALSALL	H	4—0	4,857	Smillie, Yeo (2), Riddick
	16	Orient'	A	1—1		Smillie
	20	ORIENT'	H	2—1	9,563	Riddick (2)
	23	SHREWSBURY	H	4—1	5,270	Riddick, Simpson, Yeo, Machin (pen.)
	30	Bournemouth	A	0—2		
Dec.	7	Luton'	A	1—3		Yeo
	13	Stockport	A	0—5		
	21	BRISTOL R.	H	0—2		
	26	READING	H	2—2	4,692	Yeo (2)
	28	Plymouth	A	1—1		Riddick
Jan.	11	WATFORD	H	0—5	6,641	
	25	N'HAMPTON	H	2—0	4,532	Yeo, Woodley
	28	Walsall	A	1—2		Yeo (pen.)
Feb.	1	HARTLEPOOL	H	2—2	4,785	T. Simpson, Woodley
	25	Swindon	A	0—1		
Mar.	1	TRANMERE	H	1—1	3,860	Gilbert
	3	Orient	A	1—1		Gilbert
	5	SWINDON	H	2—0	6,104	Riddick Gilbert
	10	Hartlepool	A	1—1		Riddick
	14	BARNSLEY	H	1—1	5,961	Riddick
	22	Luton	A	1—1		Yeo
	26	CREWE	H	1—0	5,072	Yeo
	29	TORQUAY	H	0—0	6,200	
Apl.	4	Oldham	A	0—1		
	5	Mansfield	A	0—2		
	7	BARROW	H	2—0		Gilbert (2)
	12	SOUTHPORT	H	0—0	4,516	
	16	OLDHAM	H	2—0	5,736	Williams (2)
	19	Brighton	A	2—0		Gilbert, Smillie
	22	BOURNEM'TH	H	0—0	6,615	
	30	Crewe	A	2—4		Woodley, Riddick
May	5	Shrewsbury	A	1—1		Riddick

* League Cup ' F.A. Cup

Appearances, including League and F.A. Cups: Bailey 23 and 3 as sub.; Bellotti 21; Folds 3 and 1 as sub.; Gibbs 7; Gilbert 20 and 1 as sub.; Green 47; Machin 34 and 1 as sub.; Meredith 47; Osborne 1; Quirke 28 and 5 as sub.; Riddick 46 and 1 as sub.; J. Simpson 26; T. Simpson 30 and 2 as sub.; Smillie 27; Thear 2; Weston 34; Williams 48; Woodley 47; Yeo 41.

Goalscorers: Yeo 18, Riddick 12, Gilbert 9, Woodley 7, T. Simpson 4, Williams 3, Smillie 3, Quirke 2, Machin 1, Gibbs 1.

Record (including League and F.A. Cups): P.51, W.14, D.17, L.20, F.60, A.76.

Basil Hayward's Own Column

LADS ROSE TO THE OCCASION

PRIESTFIELD Stadium will stage Division Three football next season. After the worry and cliff — hanger programme of the last two months the lads rose to the occasion at Shrewsbury on Monday night to win the vital point.

But before I talk about the Gay Meadow game I feel I must comment on the tremendous interest the four up, four down system in the division has created this season.

Surely there can be no doubt that this system, which operates in the lower divisions, can do nothing but good and provide intensive interest for supporters.

Promotion battles were not really settled until the last fortnight and the relegation fight was wide open and in doubt for about ten clubs until nearly the season's end.

GREAT PITY

This has brought tremendous interest and even at the time of writing this article the promoted clubs in Division Four have not been decided. It is a great pity that the Football League's higher powers cannot agree on this system working throughout the League.

Our fate for next season was decided at Shrewsbury on Monday. We travelled to Shropshire by train early on Monday morning, booked into our hotel and the lads had a lie down in the afternoon to ease the pressures before a 7.30 kick-off.

We got to the ground a little earlier than we would normally have done, had a good look at the pitch, and adjusted studs to suit the conditions.

I brought in Mel Machin to play alongside Andy Smillie, John Meredith and Gordon Riddick in midfield, with Derek Woodley and Brian Yeo responsible for the hard running. Meredith and Riddick would also assist Woodley and Yeo in breaking.

The back four and keeper John Simpson did a wonderful job for the club to contain the Shrewsbury attack, and if we can maintain the approach that has been shown in the last two months then our problems on the pitch will have diminished considerably.

The game went excellently for us. We grabbed a very quick goal which gave the lads the confidence they needed and we could have had a couple more before the half-time whistle.

The team played soundly with everyone working so hard that we did not look like conceding a goal. When the equalizer came in the dying seconds I was not really bothered — it was all over and we were safe.

I was pleased the game finished the way it did. The two clubs needed a point from the match to avoid relegation and the result made for a pleasant evening. The Shrewsbury club gave the players champagne to toast their survival and the atmosphere was relaxed for the first time in several weeks.

Also, the players had an enjoyable drink when they went back to the hotel later in the evening — yes, they certainly deserved it after giving a fine performance for the club.

NOW THAT THE GILLS ARE SAFE

Let Basil have a free hand

SO Gillingham escape the drop. The point they took from Shrewsbury last night means that Priestfield Stadium will stage Third Division soccer again next season.

Now is the time for reflection.

It is ironic that a struggling team should provide such entertaining soccer. Let's be honest, Hayward's brand of soccer is far superior to that dished up in promotion year in the Fourth Division.

While we are being honest, are we being fair if we put the blame for a poor season on Hayward's shoulders? Here is a man who has been dogged by bad luck, lack of cash and, worst of all, constant abuse by the supporters.

If we study the position at Priestfield Stadium it is all the more remarkable that the Gills have kept their Third Division place. For that feat alone some might say: "Double Hayward's salary. Give him a long term contract."

Modern approach

What of the future?

It is essential that there should be some deep thinking by the board. Dr. Grossmark and his colleagues should put their heads together and sort out what is best for the club.

If they cannot promote the club satisfactorily, they they should either resign or appoint a public relations officer to keep Gillingham in the headlines.

The board must also think of new ways to bring in money. They must take a modern approach and use all the gimmicks at their command.

Those who come and go through the boardroom door must stop looking over their shoulders anticipating the next stab in the back. The trouble makers must go.

Obviously the task facing Gillingham next season is a difficult one. The Evening Post believes Hayward has surrounded himself with sufficient basic talent to lay the foundations of a promotion side. We believe that Hayward can do it.

IF HE IS GIVEN A FREE HAND.

If he is not, there might be a case for reversing the manager-board relationship. And we mig see a headline which reads "Manager sa board."

EIGHT WAYS THAT WE SUPPORT GILLINGHAM F.C.

I MUST *certainly* contend the statements of Mr. McCandless in his letter published in Postbag on July 29.

He remarks that the Supporters' Association is "hiding away in a corner of the ground doing nothing else but providing a few pence for the mother club". It must be pointed out that our donation of £100 a week (surely more than "a few pence") is *more than the club itself can raise* from any other outside sources, including its own fund-raising scheme. I also detail just a few of the many other functions and activities we promote designed to stimulate interest in Gillingham F.C.:

- We are solely responsible for match-day catering, with five refreshment bars open at Priestfield Stadium every first team match.
- We confidently claim to have one of the best stocked *sales shops in* the Third Division.
- We produce a yearly 80-page handbook and a periodical magazine "Priestfield Press".
- Our newly-formed entertainments sub-committee ran several dances and socials last season, including the first ever "Player of the Year" competition.
- Pre-match and half-time entertainment at Priestfield is organised by ourselves.
- We run *organised Sunday football* with two teams in the local league.
- Our committee members are still assisting John Simpson with his testimonial efforts.

It will, therefore, be seen that to say we are "non-commital" is a gross understatement.

As regards away travel, we have constantly stated we will take any supporter to any away match and I know that three of our Executive Committee, John Skilling, Chris Holloway and myself each supported the Gills at more away matches last season than any other fans.

The Supporters' Association is more active now than at any time in its history (which Mr. McCandless would realise if he were to read the Evening Post occasionally).

M. A. AGATE,
Publicity Officer,
Gillingham F.C. Supporters' Club

Soccer administrators have busy week-end

FOOTBALL administrators converge on London this week-end for a busy programme.

The Football League Associate Members — the 48 clubs from Divisions 3 and 4 — annual meeting takes place today (Friday). Gillingham chairman Dr. C. S. Grossmark will preside over this meeting and the club will be represented by Mr. Charles Cox.

Tomorrow (Saturday) morning, the Football League annual meeting will be held and the agenda includes the hardy annual proposal from the Associate Members, which will be *put forward by Dr. Grossmark,* that four up and four down should operate in all divisions.

Gillingham F.C. will be represented at this meeting by Dr. Grossmark and Mr. A. E. Weller.

Gillingham Supporters' Club will be represented at the National Federation of Supporters' Clubs' annual conference at Norwich tomorrow (Saturday) by Mark Agate and Alex Bristow.

Brown can go

PORTSMOUTH are granting free transfers to two of their players, full-back Roy Pack and centre-*forward Bill Brown.*

Pack (22) joined Portsmouth three years ago from Arsenal. Brown moved from Gillingham a year ago, but failed to get a regular place.

Another full-back, George Ley, has so far not agreed to terms for next season.

HERE'S to next season . . . the Gills, jubilant after last night's cliffhanger that kept them up.

Former Gillingham winger Gordon Pulley, now playing with Ramsgate in the Southern League, opened the Blue and Whites' Vice-Presidents' Club at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday evening. Our picture shows Gordon, with members of the B. and W. committee, about to draw the first ticket for the Association's Derby Draw. The new club, situated in the main stand, will be open for the start of the new season. R.2465

Retained list bound to cause an upset

The retained list which I announced this week, with John Arnott, Barry Simmons and Bob Harrison all leaving the club and Ken Osborn available for transfer, was bound to cause an upset among some of the supporters— but then so would any retained list.

One of the troubles is that there is so much the man on the terrace does not know—about what goes on or off the field. Contracts, for example, and the fact that a player may be in his two-year option period are a major part of the set-up which few people care to consider before they start complaining.

If people only took a greater interest in this side of the game by reading their papers occasionally they might become more reluctant to pick up their pens and criticize.

Now that these decisions have been made we are getting down to planning in more detail for next season. I feel sure that John Bond and I can get from the players what they are really capable of.

The gradual grooming of staff has now reached the point where I feel we are ready to do something in the Third Division - more so than at any time since I arrived at Priestfield Stadium.

I am not saying it will be easy. There are a number of other clubs who are obvious serious contenders for top-of-the-table positions, but Gillingham has a capable staff and I feel we are in with a good chance.

We are in no way getting the support off the field that the club could reasonably expect, and without adequate fund-raising it is difficult to progress very far. In fact, considering the support we have received I feel fortunate to have obtained the players we have. Also full marks to the Board for not selling key players when they were under pressure to do so last season.

People have criticised us for our poor final position in the league. But another eight or ten points, which would have been enough to take us near the top, is nothing to achieve if you have a little more enthusiasm from the area.

The attitude of sportsmen just is not there with the majority of people who come to watch Gillingham - they don't come to support us but to see us win.

Although it is only to be expected it is still remarkable that when Gillingham climbed from the Fourth to the Third Division the gates fell because nobody assessed the merits. Make no mistake, the standard of football in the Third is vastly higher than that in the Fourth.

Basil Hayward's own column

If we could rely on the Stadium being even half-full, Gillingham could achieve great things. The atmosphere would stimulate the players who would begin to think more of making a career at Gillingham than of looking for moves. As a solid unit we could face the coming seasons with confidence.

With the attendances we have been getting, however, all the money which comes in through the gates and all the supporting organizations can raise is needed to keep the club running just the way it is, with no room for development.

Each of these two sources of income could be improved. Firstly, the gate receipts should be higher and secondly, in my opinion, the club should have complete control over all fund-raising activities — a move which I believe is vital to the progress of the club.

If another supporting organization wants to help us out, then fair enough. But the trouble here is that when their contributions reach a sizeable level they begin to want a say in the running of the club, and this just doesn't work.

Some clubs with nothing like the standing of ourselves are bringing in four times as much from outside activities as we do, and this applies even to Non-League clubs.

I feel that the sooner this 'us and them' attitude is dispelled and the players, staff, Board and supporters are all recognised as Gillingham Football Club, the better it will be for us all.

MEREDITH DEAL STILL IN DOUBT

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward today expressed doubts over the exchange transfer deal involving John Meredith and Bournemouth forward Kenny Pound.

He travelled to Portsmouth to meet Pound earlier this week, but said this morning: "There are one or two things still not right and it will be a few days yet before I can say what will happen. It could go through and it might not. I am not particularly confident at this stage."

Bournemouth manager Freddie Cox has long admired the style of the fair-haired Meredith and a move to the south coast would make the ex-Chesterfield winger the fifth ex-Gillingham man on the Cherries' payroll.

Mr. Hayward has a similar association with Pound. He introduced him to professional football when manager of Yeovil and has several times sounded out the possibilities of bringing him to Priestfield.

Chase

Although very reluctant to allow Meredith to leave there is no money available to secure the signature of Pound and it is therefore a question of which player is the more valuable to the club.

Mr. Hayward, along with many other clubs, is still in the chase for free-transfer Bournemouth utility man Ronnie Bolton, but admitted today that his thinking about new players will hinge largely on the results of the Pound negotiations.

Do Gillingham fans need special bus service?

IN a letter to the POST, Blue and White Committee man A. R. Liptrott put forward a worthwhile suggestion to help increase attendances at Gillingham matches.

"Many people find it difficult to get transport to Priestfields Stadium, as no bus route passes the ground. Those from Strood and Rochester have to catch two buses and then face the long walk to the stadium.

"Would it be possible to run special match-day buses, not only for these people, but also for those in the outlying areas of Chatham and Gillingham?" he asks.

About five years ago the Maidstone & District Company did run special match-day buses on the lines suggested, but a company spokesman said today that as more supporters now have their own cars, public transport was less necessary.

Asked for his reaction to Mr. Liptrott's suggestion, he said that at the moment the company had difficulty in manning all of their services and additional orders would only embarrass them.

"We feel that the present regular services cope quite adequately in transporting supporters to and from the ground. It is only a matter of five minutes' walk from Gillingham bus station."

● The Post does not want to see this idea ruled out. If it appeals to any supporter who finds it difficult to get to matches we should like to know and we will do our best to take the matter further.

'TRAIN TRAVEL A WISE MOVE'

Little change expected at Stadium

MANAGER Basil Hayward has not yet announced the Gillingham retained list for next season. However with a shortage of cash going into the club's coffers to buy players few departures can be expected fom the Stadium this close season.

But a big talking point in the Towns is, will Mr. Hayward bring in a new coach - trainer before the start of the season following the recent departure of Jimmy Boswell?

Since Jimmy's departure a few weeks ago the training has been supervised by Mr. Hayward, but it is now thought that the manager already has his sights fixed on the man he would like to join him at Priestfield.

The news that Gillingham have decided to play a home pre-season friendly match with Charlton Athletic has aroused considerable interest. In recent seasons the Gills have played their pre-season games away from the Stadium, but this break with tradition should instil increased interest, especially as a number of Medway soccer supporters travel regularly to Charlton.

THREE-PHASE PLAN

Talking to chairman Dr. C. S. Grossmark this week I asked him if the club's three-phase plan for the main grandstand at the Stadium had now been shelved.

Two years ago the first part - the rear of the stand and roof - was completed at a cost of just under £9,000, but the second and third phases, involving the installation of seating accommodation and offices and dressing rooms underneath the stand, have not been started.

Dr. Grossmark commented: "The second phase alone would cost £15,000, or maybe £16,000 now. But if we had the money it would be used to buy players rather than seating.

"But stand improvements have certainly not been forgotten by the club, although there is no guarantee that extra seating would pull in more supporters."

"However, it is realized that better seating would encourage women to attend matches. But the number of occasions we have sold out our 900 seats in the 25 matches that we played was limited," he added.

The chairman also answered criticisms that the club spent too much on travel and hotel accommodation for the team.

"I have heard of this criticism, but I must point out that the team travels by coach to most of the matches. Against Shrewsbury and Crewe, which everyone realized were vital games for the club, the team travelled by train.

"This was a wise move as it gave the players the opportunity to have a rest. And as far as Shrewsbury was concerned the move paid off because the team kept the club in Division 3," he said.

He also pointed out that the club's travel expenses was the equivalent of only one eighth of the wage bill.

"We at Gillingham have spent more on ground improvements in the last six months than any other club in Division 3. The playing pitch, with the possible exception of Bury, is easily the best in the division."

The club have decided not to use the Maidstone Road Ground next season. The resignation was tendered this week and Dr Grossmark commented: "We had very, very limited use of the ground, and it was too costly."

Bright news from the Blue and Whites Association is that the room in the main stand which has been converted into a vice-president's' bar will be completed next week.

Chairman Mr. Harold France said: "All being well the final touches will be put to it next week. We will then have to apply for a licence and we hope to have the club-room in full use by the start of the season."

Alterations to date have cost the Blue and Whites about £105, but expenditure has been cut to a minimum by the tremendous amount of voluntary labour that has been put into the project.

The Supporters' Association have plans in hand for members to visit the outlying areas of the Medway Towns with a view to creating interest in the Football Club and to enrol members and agents.

Publicity Officer Mr. Mark Agate said that small improvements at the Association's headquarters on the Gordon Road side at Priestfield Stadium were in hand, but the extent would depend on the parent club's reply to the Association's application for a club-house at the Ground.

Because of a great demand for the Supporters' unique rosette lapel badge a further 1,000 have been ordered. Over 3,000 were sold or exchanged last year.

GILLINGHAM F.C. '69 - 70 FIXTURES

GILLINGHAM F.C.'s Division Three and Football Combination fixture list for 1969-70 is presented in handy cut out form for supporters.

The Combination will again see Gills play opposing clubs once in the season, with the exception of cup matches, and it is noticeable that most of the 1970 Combination fixtures will be played in midweek.

Unlike last season, when matches were played before the league programme started, cup games have been spread through the season. Gills are grouped with Q.P.R., Ipswich, Norwich, Peterborough and Chelsea in a competition which will be played on a league basis.

	Football League	Football Combination
	AUGUST	
9	Mansfield (a)	Oxford Utd. (h)
13	League Cup (1st)	
16	Reading (h)	
20		Cardiff C. (a)
23	Fulham (a)	Ipswich T. (h)
25	Stockport (a)	
30	Luton (h)	Fulham (a)
	SEPTEMBER	
3	League Cup (2nd)	
6	Brighton (a)	Luton Town (h)
13	Rochdale (h)	Bristol C. (a)
17	Bristol R. (h)	
20	Rotherham (a)	Leicester C. (h)
24	League Cup (3rd)	
27	Barnsley (h)	Arsenal (a)
	OCTOBER	
1	Southport (h)	
4	Torquay (a)	Q.P.R. (h)
8	Reading (a)	
11	Tranmere (h)	West Ham (a)
15	League Cup (4th)	
18	Barrow (a)	Peterborough (h)
25	Orient (h)	Bristol R. (a)
29	League Cup (5th)	
	NOVEMBER	
1	Bradford City (a)	Tottenham (h)
8	Walsall (h)	
15	F.A. Cup (1st)	Q.P.R. (a) - Cup
19	League Cup (S.F.)	
22	Bournemouth (a)	Bournemouth (h)
25		Ipswich (a) - Cup
26	Plymouth (h)	
29	Doncaster (h)	Norwich C. (a) - Cup
	DECEMBER	
3	League Cup (S.F.O)	
6	F.A. Cup (2nd)	Birmingham (h)
13	Rochdale (a)	Chelsea (a)
17		Norwich C. (h) - Cup
20	Brighton (h)	Southampton (a)
26	Fulham (h)	
27	Luton (a)	Peterborough (h) - Cup
	JANUARY, 1970	
3	Southport (a)	Chelsea (h) - Cup
10	Rotherham (h)	Reading (a)
14		Swindon T. (h)
17	Barnsley (a)	Q.P.R. (h) - Cup
20		Norwich C. (a)
24	Halifax (h)	
31	Torquay (h)	
	FEBRUARY	
2.		Peterborough (a) - Cup
4.		Chelsea (a) - Cup
7.	Tranmere (a)	Swansea T. (h)
11.		Crystal P. (a)
21.	Orient (a)	Ipswich (h) - Cup
24.		Walsall (a)
28.	Barrow (h)	
	MARCH	
3.	Bury (a)	
6.	Bournemouth (h)	
11.	Shrewsbury (h)	
14.	Doncaster (a)	
17.	Halifax (a)	Northampton (a)
21.	Bury (h)	
27.	Bradford C. (h)	
28.	Shrewsbury (a)	
31.	Walsall (a)	
	APRIL	
1		Plymouth (h)
4	Stockport (h)	
8	Plymouth (a)	
11	F.A. Cup Final	
14	Bristol Rovers (a)	

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Hunt joins Folkestone

FORMER Gillingham full-back Denis Hunt, who was with the club for 10 seasons, has been appointed manager of Southern Leaguers Folkestone Town. He was released by the Gills at the end of the 1967-68 season and joined Brentford, but had to give up playing because of injury. Hunt still lives in the Medway Towns.

New coach starts within a fortnight

EX-HAMMER TO JOIN THE GILLS

John Bond

JOHN BOND, ex-West Ham and Torquay full back, has joined Gillingham as trainer-coach. Arrangements were finalised on Wednesday morning and Bond will start work within the next fortnight.

Bond, a 6ft. 2 ins. 14 stone defender born at Colchester, played 41 team matches in his first season with Torquay after joining them from the First Division club, writes **MURRAY EVANS.**

"But," emphasised Gills' boss Basil Hayward, "it is not his past performances that concern me. He is not here to play.

"Though I respect him as a player, partly as a result of playing against him myself, his job at Gillingham will be to work closely with me in training, coaching and scouting.

"I hope we can foster a good manager-coach relationship which is essential in a successful club. I think John and I can work well together and his presence should benefit Gillingham tremendously."

IN LONDON

So far, he said, Bond who lives in London, had not met the players at the club but already knows most of them from past encounters.

Gillingham have been without a trainer since Jimmy Boswell left the club just over five weeks ago after 27 years association with them.

Said Mr. Hayward yesterday (Thursday): "I have always accepted that we had to get someone to replace him — someone who thinks along the same lines as myself."

The choice, he said, was between Bond and Basil's old playing colleague at Port Vale, Roy Sproson, who still takes to the field.

The Gillingham players are still anxious this week to find out who is going to be on the club's retained list for next season.

Mr. Hayward said the announcement has been delayed partly through the extra length of last season, but he hopes to release the names of those players who will be leaving, early next week, as soon as the players themselves have been told.

"Whether or not we shall be able to sign a player or two from other clubs during the close season," said Mr. Hayward, "I believe we have enough players of the required quality to give us a good start."

News of Gills' midfield player, Terry Simpson, who has a broken leg, is that he should be having the plaster removed shortly and may well be fit for the beginning of next season.

Hayward forges a new bond

THE new boy, John Bond arrives at Priestfield to discuss plans for the coming season with Basil Hayward.

THE first new face with Gillingham has reported for duty at Priestfield Stadium. With the Gillingham players due to return on Thursday, July 3, new trainer-coach John Bond edged his way into his new position in readiness for the big kick-off on August 9.

His playing career came to an end when he retired at the close of last season from Torquay. This will be a new side of the game for the experienced ex - West Ham stalwart who was honoured on three occasions by England "B".

"I have been hoping to break into the management side of things and am grateful to Basil for giving me the opportunity. We have known each other for some time and must now get together and find the recipe for success."

Bond was on West Ham's books when Andy Smillie and Derek Woodley were with the London club and added: "I have played against Gillingham a few times and know most of the other players quite well."

Club coach is a new position for Gillingham, but judging by the success that many other clubs have achieved through similar appointments, it can be a vital cog in the modern soccer club machine.

Youngsters get chance

"WILL young lads, under 18 by September 1 1969 and desirous of having trials, please write to Mr. R. Green, youth team secretary, Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham . . ." this is a quote from the programme of Gills' last home game.

For many years Kent's only League side has been without a forward-looking youth policy and as a result, talent has not been recruited at the right age.

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward realises the importance of a scheme to weed out the best of local talent so that they can provide the club with a younger element in years to come.

A Third or Fourth Division club are seldom in the position to buy players who will improve the side and they are therefore faced with either picking up free transfer players and taking pot-luck, or breeding their own.

Mr. Hayward says, "Over the years, Gillingham have got themselves a bad name for the handling of youth, and any worthwhile young player has been discouraged from joining the club and sent to West Ham and the like."

He is now making an all-out attempt to put this right. "There is not much local talent in the area but if we can show them that we are interested then it might give them an incentive to work at their game and with our help they could develop," he said.

Gills already have six apprentice professionals on their books — Ken Hill, Graham Knight, John Ribbins, Geoff Bray, Dick Tydeman and David Peach — and their performances in experienced Football Combination company this season augurs well for the future.

Roll up lads and write for those trials, you've got nothing to lose and plenty to gain!

GILLS WILL PLAY CHARLTON

Andy Smillie to have a minor operation

Gordon Riddick, the Gills' skipper, who scored the vital goal that keeps Gillingham in Division Three.

WHILE Gillingham players tied up loose ends at the Stadium yesterday (Thursday) before leaving to enjoy their short summer break one player is booked for a hospital bed at Southend General on Monday.

For four weeks schemer Andy Smillie has played in the Gills' relegation matches with a painful foot and on Monday he will have a minor operation.

Smillie is the club's only casualty after the hectic programme the club has gone through in recent weeks. But while the players will leave to enjoy their summer break manager Basil Hayward will spend most of his time at the ground preparing for next season's campaign.

One bold move the Gills' boss took this week was to arrange a pre-season friendly match at the Stadium with near-neighbours Charlton Athletic, who were narrowly pipped for promotion to Division One.

This is a break from tradition for the Gills. Last season the club played a series of matches against Southern League opposition away from home, but now the fans are going to see the team in action at the Stadium before the season kicks-off on 9 August.

"Last season we were not sure of our playing set-up but now I feel we have settled down into a system, and I think that with the visit of Charlton we will be able to cash-in on supporters' interest.

"In the coming season we should be able to get down quickly to the game", he added.

NEW CLUBS

The players will probably report for training call-up early in July and new clubs on view at the Stadium will be Fulham and Bury, relegated from Division 2, and, at the time of going to press, Doncaster from Div. 4. Three clubs will accompany Doncaster but they are not known yet.

Gillingham's fight to avoid the drop in league status was a cliff-hanger. But the tremendous display since February, which brought only three defeats in 19 matches, must stand the team in good stead for the new season.

The 'forgotten man' at Gillingham, Terry Simpson, the midfield maestro who performed so well before breaking a leg on 26 March against Crewe, is going home to the Midlands with his family for a holiday.

He hopes to have the plaster removed within a month and will then start light training in a bid to be fit for the season's opening games.

CLOSE WATCH

During the close season Mr. Hayward will be keeping a close watch on the "free," lists circulated by clubs. He said this week: "We might be able to take suitable players on a free transfer, but at the moment we are not in a position to buy.

"I think the present team's performance in the last three months has shown supporters that the players have the ability and determination to do well. I do not want to sell anyone, but would rather build the team into a challenging force", he said.

The Gills' boss has not yet decided on his retained list for next season but an announcement is expected sometime next week.

But while the senior members of the staff have ended their programme the Gills' youth squad still have matches to play. Tomorrow (Saturday), they visit Tottenham Youths and on Monday meet Ipswich at the Garrison Soccer Stadium.

The club will also arrange trials for Medway Towns' youngsters in the coming weeks.

No change

THERE will be no change in the prices of season tickets at Gillingham Football Club next season.

Seats in the Gordon Road stand and the wings of the main stand will cost £9, and price for a seat in the centre block of the main stand will be £9 10s.

The books of tickets will be available next week. Applications are now invited and should be sent to the Secretary, Mr. Ron Swan, of Priestfield Stadium.

How can we be confident? asks Gills' fan

SPORT POST-BAG

ALTHOUGH officially the close season as far as playing soccer is concerned, comments by Gillingham manager Basil Hayward in the POST are worth noting.

He says: "The trouble is that supporters do not always share your confidence and optimism."

This is really too much. How can one have confidence and optimism with the same team, great triers every one, who escaped relegation by just one point?

While giving credit for a fine fighting finish to the season, Mr. Hayword must know that some positions need strengthening.

Recalling the last 50 years, I cannot think of a weaker pair of backs representing the Gills than last season's performers.

I also note that Mr. Hayward is hoping to deal with Bournemouth for a player or two.

He will have to be up very early in the morning to get the benefit of a deal with Freddie Cox who has already taken several good players from Gillingham.

Regarding the lack of support and falling gates, I wonder if the Gillingham management studied the average attendance figures for league clubs recently published?

It was rather significant that attendances in all leagues, especially the Third Division, were in direct proportion to the clubs' league positions at the end of the season.

There must be a moral somewhere.

"AN OLD SUPPORTER"
(name and address supplied)